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LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

MÉTIS NATION SPECIAL CONSULTATION

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1 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

2 --- Upon resuming on Tuesday, January 18, 1994

3 at 8:30 a.m.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN (JIM BOURQUE, Métis**

5 **Development Corporation):** Good morning, ladies and  
6 gentlemen. We are right on time and we would like to get  
7 on with our agenda.

8 I would like to ask Father Guy Lavallée  
9 to lead us in opening prayer.

10 **(Opening Prayer)**

11 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

12 I will ask Bill to do a background  
13 overview on Question 3, and Garth will come up and do a  
14 background information on Question 4. Following that we  
15 will break into workshops.

16 **BILL HAINAULT, Métis Nation of Alberta:**

17 Thank you, Jim.

18 Fundamental Question Number Three is:

19 "What is the anticipated nature and scope of Métis

20 self-governing institutions and

21 how do these institutions relate

22 to one another? What is the most

23 appropriate way of empowering

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1                                   these institution in terms of  
2                                   fiscal and jurisdictional  
3                                   authority to fulfil these  
4                                   responsibilities?"

5                                   The Métis Nation of Canada is asserting  
6                                   its inherent right of self-government and  
7                                   self-determination. The assertion of the inherent right  
8                                   has never been relinquished and is based fundamentally  
9                                   on the emergence of a Métis Nation on the plains of western  
10                                   Canada in the 18th century, claim the Métis Nation.  
11                                   Moreover, the Métis Nation takes the position that the  
12                                   inherent right of self-government is already recognized  
13                                   and confirmed in section 35(1) of the Constitution of  
14                                   Canada and that the principle of self-determination as  
15                                   recognized in International Law (e.g. Article 1(2) of the  
16                                   Charter of the United Nations, 1945) provides for the basis  
17                                   for Métis self-government.

18                                   The first part of the question -- what  
19                                   is the anticipated nature and scope of Métis self-governing  
20                                   institutions -- basically governments have been reluctant  
21                                   to seek power and resources to Métis people and instead  
22                                   have tried to accommodate Métis associations as delivery  
23                                   agents for federal and provincial programs and services.

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1 The Métis Nation has pressed for and negotiated with  
2 governments a process to devolve programs and services  
3 via self-governing institutions of the Métis Nation.

4 The Métis have been able to demonstrate  
5 that policies, programs and institutions are most  
6 effective when those responsible for their design and  
7 administration are responsible and accountable to those  
8 who are served by the.

9 Mechanisms within the Métis Nation have  
10 to be developed and designed appropriately to disseminate  
11 authority for community-based delivery of all relevant  
12 programs affecting Métis. The delivered design has to  
13 allow flexibility and be locally attuned in that the scope  
14 of Métis self-governing institutions will vary. We  
15 believe that self-governing institutions will become a  
16 reality at both the local level in terms of local Métis  
17 associations, at the community level, on a regional level  
18 in terms of regional councils or areas throughout the Métis  
19 homeland in the different parts of the Métis homeland,  
20 as well as provincially and nationally.

21 As many of you may know, the Métis  
22 National Council has formed a Métis national council  
23 composed of a cabinet and ministers responsible for

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1 different areas.

2                                 Similar events have taken place in  
3 provincial Métis organizations, such as the Métis Society  
4 of Saskatchewan, and developments are in place and events  
5 are occurring so that that kind of development of Métis  
6 self-government at the political level is occurring.

7                                 The other thing in the work groups that  
8 you have to look at is the nature and scope of what we  
9 call self-governing institutions or institutions off a  
10 land base. These institutions would be Métis specific,  
11 Métis directed, Métis controlled, delivering those  
12 programs and services that are required and needed by Métis  
13 people in communities off a land base, such as in urban  
14 centres.

15                                 I know the Royal Commission has heard  
16 of the concept of status blind self-governing institutions  
17 in urban centres, which means that all Aboriginal people  
18 would be lumped together and programs and services would  
19 be delivered and directed through status blind  
20 organizations. We as Métis people reject that concept  
21 or form of self-government for Métis off a land base.  
22 We believe that the Métis, like our First Nations cousins,  
23 can, should and must deliver programs and services off

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1 a land base through Métis only organizations.

2                   Some of the related questions regarding  
3 the question of the scope and nature of Métis  
4 self-governing institutions and appropriate ways of  
5 empowering these institutions in terms of fiscal and  
6 jurisdictional authority are related to what we believe  
7 how this could have been accomplished through the Métis  
8 Nation Accord that was part of the Charlottetown Accord.

9                   It is really a question, as some of the  
10 discussion yesterday pointed out, identifying what is the  
11 responsibilities of these institutions, what is their role  
12 and mandate, and then providing them with the resources  
13 necessary to fulfil their mandate.

14                   I don't know what more I can say on that.

15 I think building on these ideas will come out of the work  
16 groups. I think I will leave it at that.

17                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much,  
18 Bill.

19                   Garth, would you do the background  
20 overview on Question 4.

21                   **GARTH WALLBRIDGE, Métis Nation of the**  
22 **Northwest Territories:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23                   The question deals with the obligations

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1 of both provincial and federal governments to the Métis  
2 people and what sort of mechanisms might be put in place  
3 in recognition of these relationships. For the people  
4 in the room here, most of you will have a very good idea  
5 of the background material and I certainly do not want  
6 to bore you with it. But I will go through quickly some  
7 of the ideas that you can draw from the materials in front  
8 of you and just other materials that are out there.

9                   For a number of people the concept of  
10 where the obligations come from is based in the legal  
11 concept of contract; that there was an agreement made in  
12 1870 which has yet to be honoured. That is one possibility  
13 in terms of the obligation.

14                   Another source is in the field of  
15 following through from the constitutional documents of  
16 Canada, the Constitution Act of 1982. We go back from  
17 there all the way to the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and  
18 the obligation placed on agents of the Crown to deal with  
19 the rights of people occupying the areas.

20                   There is the court decision re Eskimos  
21 which extended the concept in section 91(24) of the federal  
22 government's obligations for Indians and land reserves.  
23 For Indians it was extended to include Eskimos. We can



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1 also look at that.

2                   There is the fiduciary duty that is set  
3 out, and we see that in some of the current case law.  
4 The fiduciary duty is based on a trust relationship. There  
5 is a question of the need for the fiduciary -- in this  
6 case it would be the government -- to fulfil obligations  
7 that continue to exist.

8                   One downside to the concept of Métis  
9 people pursuing the ability to be recognized by the federal  
10 government as being included within section 91(24) is that  
11 by definition -- and that is of course the whole intention  
12 -- the stand-alone idea of an Aboriginal people called  
13 the Métis gets subsumed into this idea of Indianness, and  
14 in this era of self-government that of course presents  
15 problems for some people.

16                   There is a question of equity, another  
17 legal concept which is most easily explained simply as  
18 fairness. That can be seen as something that the law  
19 recognizes equity, but beyond that there is the moral  
20 aspect to that.

21                   The obligations are numerous in terms  
22 of what areas they might flow to. Just a selection --  
23 certainly not a comprehensive list by any means -- would

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1 be the standard four items that we heard about through  
2 the course of our discussions yesterday, including lands,  
3 resources, hunting rights and self-government rights.

4                   The provinces' obligations in the west:

5     In the early 1930s there was the Natural Resource Transfer  
6 Agreement where the responsibility for natural resources  
7 was transferred from the federal government to the  
8 provinces.

9                   The Royal Commission contracted for a  
10 couple of papers on section 91(24). The summary of that  
11 material is in the materials presented to you for your  
12 consideration prior to attending the workshops. In those  
13 materials the writers talk about the case law, for  
14 instance, being consistent in judges having determined  
15 that constitutionally the government can assert  
16 jurisdiction for the Métis.

17                   The authors in those studies talk about  
18 how the federal responsibility is fairly clearly defined  
19 in terms of the Métis fitting within section 91(24) and  
20 their opinion by virtue of such items as inclusion in  
21 contemporary Métis land claims and of course up in my part  
22 of the country, in the Northwest Territories, with the  
23 Sahtu claim most recently. That is an illustration of

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1 that.

2                   There is the inclusion of Métis on band  
3 lists at the present time, flowing from the concept in  
4 1985 with the federal government in Bill C-31. So we see  
5 obligations flowing to Métis people there for those that  
6 fit within that definition.

7                   There was the Scrip process at the end  
8 of the last century and more currently the inclusion of  
9 Métis within section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982.

10                   In one of the papers the authors  
11 discussed how in section 35 two of the three Aboriginal  
12 peoples of Canada who are enumerated there are recognized  
13 in law today as being Indians and fitting within section  
14 91(24), and they then of course see no problem in extending  
15 that to the Métis being the third Aboriginal peoples who  
16 are enumerated there.

17                   Finally, we have to move from the legal  
18 obligations to the political obligations or the moral  
19 obligations found in the political field. We need to  
20 consider I think as we go through our discussions this  
21 morning the idea that Métis have been treated as a special  
22 needs group as opposed to a special rights group. The  
23 federal government and the provincial governments have

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1 implemented a few social programs, economic development  
2 programs, CAEDS, Pathways, et cetera, but of course the  
3 concern of many Métis people is that the benefits that  
4 flow under these programs and the limited scope of the  
5 programs comes nowhere close to meeting the benefits that  
6 flow to Indian people.

7                   We must keep in mind that the vast  
8 majority of services provided to Indian people are  
9 discretionary. There is no obligation there on the  
10 government.

11                   If we look to what would be the  
12 possibility of finding moral obligations on the  
13 government, I think we can look to the experience with  
14 the Indian people where these services are just provided  
15 on a discretionary basis.

16                   Those are the highlights of my notes.

17 I think based on the knowledge that you people have and  
18 the materials that have been prepared, we can go from there.

19                   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Garth.

21                   The process this morning will be that  
22 we break out into our workshops. But it does not look  
23 like we have enough people here this morning to break out

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1 into four workshops so I think we will consider breaking  
2 out into three workshops this morning for Question No.  
3 3.

4 The rapporteurs for the three workshops  
5 will be Garth Wallbridge, Marc LeClair and Clem Chartier.

6 We will do number 3, hopefully be done  
7 by 10:30, break from 10:30 to 10:45 and we will go right  
8 into number 4 and be finished by 12:30 when the facilitators  
9 will report.

10 Lunch will be between 1:00 and 2:00  
11 o'clock. If we can be on time that would be great, because  
12 I am reminded that there are some people who have to leave  
13 today and have to be finished by 5 o'clock. There are  
14 schedules to meet.

15 Check-out time in the hotel is  
16 1 o'clock.

17 The rooms that we will use will be  
18 Florence, Salon B and Venice. We can break out into  
19 workshops and reconvene here at 12:30 for the plenary  
20 session so we can get the reports from the facilitators  
21 and go for lunch at 1 o'clock.

22 Thank you.

23 --- A short pause

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1                   There is one further change. Some  
2 people feel we should still have four workshops because  
3 people will keep wandering in over the course of the  
4 morning. So we will break out into four workshops. It  
5 is the same rooms as yesterday, except for Salon B.

6 **--- Hearing adjourned for breakout discussions at**  
7 **9:00 a.m.**

8 **--- Upon resuming at 12:45 p.m.**

9                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Belcourt, please.

10                   **TONY BELCOURT:** Thank you, Mr.  
11 Chairman.

12                   Because we had two workshops back to back  
13 this morning, the rapporteurs have not had a chance to  
14 get together and put together a comprehensive summary of  
15 what went on in all of the workshops. What I will do is  
16 summarize the key points that were raised in the workshop  
17 I was the facilitator of and other facilitators are going  
18 to add some comments to that.

19                   With regard to Question 3, this was the  
20 discussion we had this morning about institution of  
21 self-government. A question was raised immediately about  
22 the relationship between Métis self-government and  
23 provincial governments and institutions. What is the

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1 scope of the powers? Are there law-making powers? Are  
2 these for example in the case of education powers that  
3 might be for a local school board or those of a province;  
4 basic questions that we have heard from before.

5                   The scope and nature of the powers in  
6 self-government can be both land based and urban based.

7     The point was made that today a great deal of the  
8 involvement of the Métis is in service delivery. There  
9 is little involvement of the Métis in policy-making and  
10 almost none in law-making decisions.

11                   One of the Commissioners mentioned that  
12 at the public hearings, coincident with that statement,  
13 the aspirations of the people who came forward to the public  
14 hearings were for control of the delivery of services and  
15 not so much raising the sights to law-making powers.

16                   A comment was also made that people who  
17 do not have experience in law-making powers want to assure  
18 delivery of programs and services and that that has been  
19 their focus and not necessarily power per se. The question  
20 of actual institutions, in some cases in some areas would  
21 not be Aboriginal only. Some people believe in public  
22 government being an acceptable authority for delivery of  
23 programs and services.

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1                   The question was raised that if we have  
2 an enumeration, will this be totally representative of  
3 all the Métis when we do get to the question of power.

4                   The question of accountability and  
5 recognition of Métis organizations was raised; also the  
6 question should Métis political organizations be involved  
7 in programs and services, a parallel suggestion being that  
8 Canadians would not stand the Liberal Party of Canada,  
9 for example, tampering with and developing as a political  
10 party, forcing government officials on how to deliver  
11 certain programs. So Métis organizations were being  
12 equated as a political organization.

13                   There was mention made that there needs  
14 to be a transition phase of power and authority over time  
15 as Métis become more familiar. We cannot have government  
16 structures overnight. We were taken through the  
17 transition Commission authority that exists in the Métis  
18 Settlements Council, which is made up of the provincial  
19 government and the Métis governments that are dealing with  
20 by-laws, policy decision-making, financial issues.

21                   The suggestion was made that we have to  
22 be careful how to design self-government institutes and  
23 in fact transition authorities, that we should also bear



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1 in mind that we should have elders around and we should  
2 not forget the fact that it is difficult to get people  
3 comfortable with policy-making and by-laws when people  
4 are struggling with the issue of better homes.

5                   Jurisdiction can be measured in terms  
6 of territory or membership; i.e. on a land base or off  
7 a land base. The suggestion was made that legislative  
8 power could stay at certain jurisdictions until displaced  
9 over a period of time; institutions could grow. They may  
10 focus on delivery today but then may grow to have  
11 policy-making and law-making powers.

12                   It was pointed out that in terms of a  
13 transition of time in the case of settlements, they have  
14 been doing it for seven years. There seems to be an  
15 expectation that transition has to be almost immediate.

16                   It was pointed out that in Canada we still have provinces  
17 fighting over power 120 years after Confederation. That  
18 issue has not been settled.

19                   In terms of continuing authority of  
20 government's transition of members and the fact that our  
21 people are demanding accountability, time is needed for  
22 our people to heal and that we should take the time; that  
23 perhaps 50 years from now Métis will still be debating

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1 the question of the definition. But keep in mind 100 years  
2 ago when they hung Louis Riel they knew who they hung;  
3 they hung a Métis.

4 In summary, in developing our structures  
5 we should bear in mind being flexible and diverse.  
6 Flexibility and diversity are important matters to keep  
7 in consideration.

8 On the question of status blind, that  
9 was discussed quite a bit in our workshop. One comment  
10 was made that if you are going to have self-government  
11 is it proper to impose some form of delivery such as status  
12 blind? The models for self-government, that we should  
13 identify our needs and they should come from the  
14 communities. There should be a support of the Royal  
15 Commission getting funding to get the information to the  
16 universities and schools.

17 The emphasis on the process being  
18 bottoms up was repeated a number of times and we did --  
19 that was in Workshop No. 2. I should not mention that  
20 in the context of this.

21 One of the thoughts was that not all  
22 things should take a lot of time. Self-government may  
23 be great but Métis people through deprivation are under

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1 somebody else's control and we have to make sure that we  
2 move forward even though we cannot settle all the issues  
3 today.

4 Thank you.

5 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Tony.

6 Would any of the facilitators like to  
7 add to that?

8 **BERNIE WOOD, Manitoba Métis Federation:**

9 Yes, I would like to add a couple of things.

10 We had the benefit of having  
11 representatives in our group from the Métis settlements  
12 and they provided a lot of information on what they have  
13 had to do to assume some of their authority and  
14 responsibilities in their communities.

15 I would like to read out some of the  
16 issues that were raised in our group.

17 Self-government must be an incremental  
18 process where we consider the wishes and the capacities  
19 of the communities. Concerns expressed that Aboriginal  
20 self-government will mean more bureaucracy and the  
21 disadvantages that come with it.

22 A fee for service schemes must be  
23 assessed on a case-by-case basis. An example of that was

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1 dealing with the issue of the child care program, because  
2 in some cases it might work and in other cases the  
3 communities would be at a disadvantage.

4                   Regardless of the meaning of  
5 self-government, the gaining of greater control over  
6 public resources and services has benefits for people in  
7 communities. An example is pride and self confidence.

8                   Developments in the Canadian legal  
9 system are necessary to deal with the changes worked by  
10 the development of self-government constitutions. Many  
11 problems arise from that.

12                   One fear of self-government which  
13 invites careful consultations with local people by  
14 government is that poor people would need to be taxed beyond  
15 their means to provide necessary services. The answer  
16 is to develop things on a gradual basis.

17                   The Métis settlements of Alberta should  
18 be examined by RCAP. Some of the issues that should be  
19 examined regarding Métis settlements are security forms,  
20 seizure of communal lands, tax incentive schemes and  
21 banking and financial institution development.

22                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

23                   Is that it? Garth?

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1                   **GARTH WALLBRIDGE:** I have some comments  
2 that I would like to add, Mr. Chairman.

3                   The Question 3 group that I was with was  
4 a pretty dynamic group. We got a dialogue going where  
5 people were challenging each other and that was a nice  
6 way to proceed. A couple of questions were raised and  
7 I think it appropriate to move on to issues other than  
8 the ones that were just discussed, and I hope I do not  
9 repeat by accident any of them that have been discussed.

10                  One thing was that governance as it  
11 exists for the moment for Métis groups under the Societies  
12 Act is a problem. It is a corporate model, not a  
13 constitutional model. As a consequence, the Métis groups  
14 are seen as clients of the provincial governments and are  
15 therefore muzzled. There is a need for constitutional  
16 protection to entrench funding arrangements.

17                  We discussed the Métis settlements, as  
18 Bernie was mentioning. The key there was that on those  
19 settlements people are in control of their resources and  
20 that is where the big benefit was seen.

21                  A question was raised by one of the  
22 Commissioners if the proposed self-government  
23 institutions will be the same as today's governing bodies.

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1 We explored that at some length. One of the comments  
2 made by one of the participants that the MNC has an  
3 artificial structure and it is built on artificial  
4 structures. But despite that, other comments were made  
5 that at least there is a structure there; that for those  
6 people without a land base as the settlements, there was  
7 some value in that.

8 The internal struggles in the existing  
9 Métis organizations are slowing progress overall.

10 Abuse of powers by leaders in the  
11 existing Métis organizations is especially a concern to  
12 women.

13 A comment was made that the Hutterites  
14 from their very beginnings in this country have been in  
15 control of their lives. They have done that quietly.  
16 They have been in control of how they do things, such as  
17 their own education, and they have prospered. That was  
18 seen as a model that was worth looking to.

19 A question was raised if a land base is  
20 a necessary requirement. At first that was answered in  
21 the negative. Later on we went back and several people  
22 felt that no, in fact that was the wrong answer; that in  
23 fact the land base is required. We must have resources,

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1 including land, one of the reasons being that at the  
2 individual level at the very least with a land base  
3 somewhere an individual can call some place home, and as  
4 a nation there is a need for a land base so that there  
5 is a territory to go with that concept of nation.

6                   The vast majority of Métis people do not  
7 live in distinct Métis settlements so must develop  
8 institutions that recognize this. We got into that whole  
9 discussion of status blind institutions and I don't need  
10 to repeat that.

11                   The Métis child and family services in  
12 a couple of the provinces were discussed, and there was  
13 both good and bad examples from that. One of the items  
14 that came out of that is that these agencies seem to work  
15 best when they are as far removed from the political arms  
16 of the organizations as is possible. However, it is still  
17 recognized that there is a need, as the politicians do  
18 represent the people, and as the politicians can access  
19 the other levels of government in terms of getting into  
20 see people to change policies, that some political link  
21 needed to be maintained.

22                   Framework agreements in the broad sense  
23 between Métis organizations and the present government

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1 structures are important to organize these things as well  
2 as to ensure that changes to policy could happen over time.

3 Another question was raised how to  
4 finance self-government. Responses to that included just  
5 the rights to the resources that exist in the areas: oil,  
6 gas, minerals, renewable resources. It was felt that  
7 unconditional transfer payments were indicated and indeed  
8 transfer payments in the general sense in the Canadian  
9 experience are common.

10 The comment was made by an individual  
11 that as contributing tax-payers there is an entitlement  
12 to the financing necessary. Another comment was made that  
13 financing in the same pro rata amounts as other Aboriginal  
14 groups would be appropriate.

15 A comment was made by an individual that  
16 is directly related to this question of financing and  
17 taxation, to the effect that we say the Métis are  
18 impoverished people so I would hate to try to live off  
19 the taxes collected from them. That was related, of  
20 course, to the whole concept of transfer payments.

21 There was a call for a specified number  
22 of seats in different levels of government, municipal,  
23 provincial and federal. The problem with that though that



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1 was felt by some is that if the Métis people in those  
2 reserved or specific seats were just puppets, there was  
3 no value in it at all and in fact there were some serious  
4 negative connotations to that. One of the caveats put  
5 on this was unless there was a veto power.

6                   It was suggested that in one particular  
7 area where there were high numbers of Métis people and  
8 they represent the majority that they should in fact just  
9 run the municipal councils. In contrast, the idea was  
10 raised that it would be better to be autonomous.

11                   The statement that self-government is  
12 actually represented by political independence within a  
13 larger community seemed to sum up the feeling for a lot  
14 of the people; that delivery only but not the actual design  
15 and control of government programs certainly does not equal  
16 self-government.

17                   The idea was raised that even though it  
18 was not perfect there is in fact at present some program  
19 delivery, and that is progress. We need to keep on that  
20 track.

21                   There are three final points that I will  
22 raise, one of them an interesting one that I think Doug  
23 sitting next to me probably intends to look into a little

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1 further, and that is that at the present time Métis  
2 management and control of Métis labour is losing control  
3 in some instances through labour unions, and there are  
4 all kinds of connotations that go with that.

5                   The second to last point is that there  
6 are, according to one of the participants -- and I think  
7 it fairly summarizes the work that we did -- three  
8 realities. One reality is that there is existing  
9 Aboriginal self-government in the Métis settlement areas.  
10 The second reality is that existing self-government at  
11 the community level exists. It is basically a government  
12 in waiting. The difficulty there is the resources are  
13 denied those governments in waiting to deliver and make  
14 themselves true governments.

15                   The third reality is that there is an  
16 artificial government in place in name only with an  
17 electoral process.

18                   Finally, the last point was made that  
19 because of the type of work that the Royal Commission has  
20 been mandated to do, we have to recognize that what we  
21 need to put forward is what is potential practical reality  
22 and to not lose sight of the fact that the wish list that  
23 we might all have does not necessarily match that practical

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1 reality and the possibilities.

2 That is all; thank you, sir.

3 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you.

4 I will just go over our schedule. We  
5 are going to break for lunch now until 2 o'clock. At 2:15  
6 we will reconvene in this room.

7 Bill Hainault.

8 **BILL HAINAULT:** I am going to do the  
9 facilitator's report for Question 4.

10 Question 4 dealt with federal and  
11 provincial government responsibilities and the mechanisms  
12 to attract that.

13 The groups basically dealt with four  
14 areas. One is the Métis Nation Accord, section 91(24),  
15 provincial responsibilities and potential mechanisms to  
16 effect that. So I will go in that order.

17 With regard to the Métis Nation Accord  
18 it was felt by the groups that the Royal Commission should  
19 recommend the implementation of the Accord ideally by a  
20 constitutional process, but not necessarily, because  
21 within the Métis Nation Accord there are provisions for  
22 the negotiation of federal-provincial responsibilities  
23 toward Métis people.

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1                   The groups also felt that the Royal  
2 Commission should be obliged to make this recommendation,  
3 to recommend the Accord, as it would be up to them to  
4 indicate why it should not proceed.

5                   With regard to section 91(24) most of  
6 the groups felt that yes, the Métis people already do fall  
7 within section 91(24) and that yes, the federal government  
8 has a fiduciary responsibility for Métis. Some people  
9 also felt that although the Métis are included in section  
10 91(24) the provinces also have a fiduciary responsibility  
11 to Métis people.

12                   One of the groups said that as Métis are  
13 included in the term "Indian" under section 91(24), they  
14 should be accorded equal treatment.

15                   As governments have been reluctant to  
16 accept this responsibility, particularly the federal  
17 government, the groups felt that this responsibility has  
18 to be nailed down and therefore a direct reference to the  
19 courts should be made in this matter with a caveat that  
20 not necessarily having Métis come under the Indian Act  
21 because the federal government has done a poor job, they  
22 felt, in that area and that we would have to look at how  
23 this responsibility would be effected for Métis people,

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1 particularly at the federal government level.

2                   With regard to provincial  
3 responsibilities, the provinces have a responsibility to  
4 treat Métis people equally. There was some differences  
5 of opinion as to whether or not the provinces had a positive  
6 obligation toward Métis or whether it was only an  
7 obligation, meaning that they would only provide programs  
8 and services equally to anybody or whether or not they  
9 have a constitutional or fiduciary responsibility for  
10 Métis people.

11                   If Métis are included in the section  
12 91(24), people from the Métis settlements felt that the  
13 Alberta Métis Settlements Accord has to be protected.

14                   There was also the idea that in terms  
15 of Métis falling within section 91(24) that this was seen  
16 by some that Métis values would clash with the notion that  
17 the state has more control over Métis people. In one of  
18 the groups there was still the question of who is a Métis  
19 and how are they going to be enumerated.

20                   There was also the idea that a precedent  
21 has been set as to the distinct recognition of the Métis  
22 on the part of the federal government in the Sahtu land  
23 claim settlement in the Northwest Territories.

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1                   They felt also that it was  
2 unconstitutional on the part of the federal government  
3 to provide services to one or two groups of Aboriginal  
4 people and excluding another Aboriginal group, the Métis.

5                   There was also the idea as to whether  
6 or not the Métis Nation Accord empowered the Métis National  
7 Council to determine citizenship for all Métis in Canada,  
8 meaning that there are pockets or groups of Aboriginal  
9 people who also claim to be Métis.

10                  I think that was the ideas and thoughts  
11 that came out of the groups, unless there are other  
12 facilitators who want to add to it.

13                  Thank you.

14                  **THE CHAIRMAN:** I want to thank you very  
15 much, Bill.

16                  **TONY BELCOURT:** I have two things to  
17 add.

18                  In our workshop the question about  
19 whether or not there was any benefit in pushing for  
20 recognition of the 91(24) was a basic question to ask.  
21 It was felt that being in 91(24) bolsters a number of  
22 arguments. One is the notion of a fiduciary obligation  
23 and that there is an obligation to act, and also the notion

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1 of equality of treatment. The federal government could  
2 play a role in protecting Métis rights and facilitate  
3 access to resources and funds.

4 It was also felt that any instrument has  
5 to be tripartite in nature.

6 The other is there was considerable  
7 discussion about the Métis Nation Accord, the possibility  
8 of it excluding other people in the east. And it was  
9 pointed out that the six Métis organizations in western  
10 Canada does not prevent others from existing or going  
11 forward with their own governments. That was not an  
12 intention of the Accord.

13 The notion that any agreement has to  
14 ratified by the communities was raised quite strongly.  
15 It was pointed out that the Métis Nation Accord, however,  
16 was a culmination of ten years of debate that started when  
17 the First Minister's Conferences first started in 1982  
18 so that what came forward was not just an isolated event  
19 that happened within a few months before the agreement  
20 was struck.

21 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Tony.

22 **BERNIE WOOD:** I would like to make a  
23 couple of quick points that were raised in our group.

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1                   One was that RCAP must do more research  
2 on the existence of positive constitutional obligation  
3 of governments to act respecting Métis rights.

4                   The other one is that RCAP must do  
5 research on the significance of the extinguishment for  
6 Métis self-government, on whether or not section 35 rights  
7 to self-government, if any, have been extinguished.

8                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

9                   Going over the schedule, we are breaking  
10 for lunch now and will return at 2 o'clock to listen to  
11 the background review on Question no. 5. We will go  
12 immediately then into plenary and finish at 3:30. At 3:45  
13 we will have the facilitators' reports and we will have  
14 the concluding hour from 4:00 to 5:00, and we will finish  
15 at 5 o'clock.

16 --- Luncheon recess at 1:20 p.m.

17 --- Upon resuming at 2:20 p.m.

18                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Are the facilitators  
19 available? We are running about 15 minutes late.

20                   We will hear now from Bernie who will  
21 give us background on Question no. 5, and right after his  
22 presentation we can break into workshops and hopefully  
23 be done by 3:30 so we can finish this meeting by 5 o'clock.



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1                   What I would like to do is have 15 minutes  
2 or so to get some comments from the floor before we adjourn.  
3 That is why we are trying to rush things a bit.

4                   Bernie, please.

5                   **BERNIE WOOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6                   The question that we will be looking at  
7 this afternoon for our fifth workshop is Question No. 5:  
8 "What reforms such as in the legislative, policy, program,  
9                   fiscal areas are necessary to  
10                   recognize the existence of the  
11                   Métis Nation? How would  
12                   recognition of the Métis Nation be  
13                   reflected in intergovernmental  
14                   structures and processes?"

15                   I came to the conclusion that it is a  
16 pretty difficult question. I think to a large degree we  
17 have reviewed some components of this question in previous  
18 workshops.

19                   It is a difficult question in the sense  
20 that we have been unable to make any substantive progress  
21 in terms of negotiations or getting governments to listen  
22 to the special circumstances that Métis people find  
23 themselves in. In previous workshops I think that

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1 expression has come out quite clearly.

2                   Some of the related questions we will  
3 be looking at are: Through what processes can greater  
4 clarity about government responsibilities and eligibility  
5 questions be resolved?

6                   I think we have touched on that to a large  
7 degree in some of the workshops where we have discussed  
8 the Métis Nation Accord. I think it is important to  
9 recognize that our problem has been one of process, of  
10 having a process that could be set up that could give the  
11 Métis people something that they could work from. The  
12 different parts of the Métis Nation Accord deal with that  
13 issue.

14                   Also to some degree I think some of the  
15 provinces within the Métis Nation have had some limited  
16 success through tripartite arrangements and even to some  
17 degree in bilateral process with their respective  
18 provinces. There again I think it is fairly restrictive  
19 in that the tripartite arrangements only deal with certain  
20 areas. As far as I know, they do not consider the full  
21 scope of the issues relating to the Métis.

22                   It has been difficult to convince  
23 different levels of governments of the need factor that

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1 is expressed throughout our Métis communities. It is  
2 frustrating I know for a lot of our people out in the  
3 communities who see programs available and services  
4 available for other people and yet they have so much  
5 difficulty fitting in to the criteria of programs that  
6 will help them.

7                   In many of our communities I know we have  
8 heard for a number of years now that education and economic  
9 development are major issues that it has been difficult  
10 for us to deal with in a substantive way in our communities,  
11 that it has not made an impact. We are hearing that from  
12 people at the grassroots level.

13                   We have had the opportunity to hear what  
14 the Alberta settlements are doing in terms of taking on  
15 authority and responsibility within their communities.  
16 I think it was quite interesting to hear that because we  
17 never had that circumstance in any of the communities I  
18 am familiar with in Manitoba.

19                   I think it was good in a sense that in  
20 some of the workshops they clearly describe the way it  
21 is for them as they accept the responsibility and the  
22 authority, but the responsibility that goes along with  
23 it, which is not easy. I think that when we are dealing

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1 with self-government and what it means to us and what do  
2 we have to do to get what we want, many people have come  
3 to the conclusion: I know what self-government means.  
4 It mean a lot of hard work for our communities.

5 I think that is the way that a lot of  
6 people are approaching it in the communities.

7 The tripartite process that some of the  
8 communities are involved in, this question is related to  
9 a lot of that. I think if it is brought up in our  
10 discussions we should look at what the tripartite process  
11 is doing for us and whether it is really serving the need  
12 in our community.

13 I think we should also look at what could  
14 be done through that process because it is a negotiating  
15 process. So far we really have not been very successful  
16 in that area and we should maybe consider that as part  
17 of this question.

18 As I mentioned earlier, everything is  
19 basically inter-related because it stems from some of the  
20 areas that we have to deal with in previous questions like  
21 media identification, the jurisdictional issue, and Métis  
22 self-government. It is not an easy question. But I think  
23 if we look at the different forms of negotiation we have

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1 had to deal with so far as provinces and as Métis people,  
2 that should lead us in to a fairly good discussion to where  
3 we can take it from here, so that we don't only know where  
4 we are in this regard but we might be able to put some  
5 thought into where we want to go, and also some ideas on  
6 what we have to do to get there.

7 I think that is basically all I can say  
8 about this question.

9 I have nothing further to add.

10 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much,  
11 Bernie.

12 We will break now into the workshop  
13 rooms. You all know where the workshop rooms are, and  
14 all the facilitators are here, I believe.

15 We will conclude the workshops at 3:30  
16 and the facilitators will have between 3:30 and 3:45 to  
17 put together their presentation and we will reconvene here  
18 at 4 o'clock.

19 **--- Hearing adjourned for breakout discussions at**  
20 **2:30 p.m.**

21 **--- Upon resuming at 4:05 p.m.**

22 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Ladies and gentlemen, we  
23 are in the last stretch. We only have an hour to go.

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1 I am going to ask Bernie as the  
2 facilitator in workshop no. 5 to present his workshop  
3 report.

4 **BERNIE WOOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 We have had a number of presentations  
6 from the groups and we will just work through them here.

7 As I mentioned in the overview of  
8 Question 5, the tripartite process was mentioned as an  
9 existing option for some of the Métis provincial  
10 associations. We had some discussion in our group about  
11 it to find out what the tripartite process was and what  
12 purpose it served; at least in Manitoba we discussed what  
13 it did there.

14 There were two questions raised.

15 One is that we should know what the  
16 federal policy is regarding tripartite. We found out that  
17 one of the major components of the tripartite process,  
18 one of its restrictions is that the government will not  
19 move on a single sector or incremental basis on tripartite  
20 unless the whole picture of what this is all going to mean  
21 is fully developed. It is an area that causes some  
22 concerns in some areas who are trying to make progress  
23 in some ways with the negotiations on tripartite

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1 arrangements.

2                   So policy adjustments on a single sector  
3 basis or incremental basis would be detrimental in some  
4 cases, was the discussion in our group.

5                   Métis people must be dealt with as a  
6 people with inherent right to self-government. This is  
7 necessary in negotiations with tripartite as well as other  
8 processes. There is reference to Métis as having that  
9 right regardless of where they were, whether in a community  
10 or in an urban area. Federal policies, especially in human  
11 resources, have mitigated against the Métis. The  
12 distinctiveness of Métis must not be ignored by federal  
13 policies. Trying to lump all Aboriginal people together  
14 is a disservice to Métis people.

15                   Some discussion was also centred around  
16 how the Aboriginal organizations were not involved as  
17 political reps but for their expertise in the training  
18 and employment areas.

19                   There was also a recommendation from our  
20 group that RCAP looks at the appeals tribunal process set  
21 up in Alberta in the Métis settlements dealing particularly  
22 with membership and the allocation of land.

23                   RCAP should recommend constitutional

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1 protection for Métis settlement lands, bilateral and  
2 trilateral processes which exist must be elevated to higher  
3 levels of negotiations. Federal programs are categorized  
4 as Aboriginal but Métis do not have access to many of them.  
5 Métis specific policies and programs must be developed  
6 federally and provincially.

7 RCAP should recommend provincial  
8 governments bring about appropriate legislation giving  
9 recognition to the existence of the Métis Nation.  
10 Provinces should work closer with Métis in negotiations  
11 with the federal government. Minimal level of service  
12 for Métis with variations depending on the different areas.

13 There was some discussion in one of the  
14 groups about options for a Métis treaty.

15 The Royal Commission should recommend  
16 the acknowledgement and existence of Métis land claims.

17 There should also be a dispute  
18 settlement mechanism with both the federal government and  
19 the provinces.

20 Governments should recognize that Métis  
21 fall within section 91(24).

22 RCAP should recommend the  
23 implementation of the Métis Nation Accord which is seen



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1 as a beginning in moving toward self-government for the  
2 Métis Nation.

3                   Set up a mechanism for block funding  
4 arrangements with the Métis.

5                   Provinces should take the lead in  
6 setting up formal processes with the Métis.

7                   When land is set aside for Métis it must  
8 be given constitutional protection.

9                   A guaranteed level of representation by  
10 both the federal and provincial governments for Métis.

11                   The federal Métis interlocutor should  
12 have the proper funding to dialogue adequately with Métis  
13 people.

14                   In the Métis settlements there is a  
15 fiscal reform that takes place in 1997 that we thought  
16 we should mention here. The arrangement is that for every  
17 dollar that is raised, the federal government will put  
18 in \$2.00. That is a five-year process that will take place  
19 beginning in 1997. It is an incentive to tax.

20                   That concludes the notes that we put  
21 together from the different workshops. I don't know if  
22 any of the other facilitators have anything to add.

23                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Is there anything to add?

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1 Thank you very much, Bernie.

2 What I am going to do now is open the  
3 floor for about 15 minutes to parting words of wisdom from  
4 anyone who wants to get up and give us those words of wisdom.

5 It is going to be restricted to 15 minutes. I am going  
6 to be ruthless because we have to get on with the task.

7 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I thought he  
8 was going to say it was only going to be restricted to  
9 words of wisdom.

10 **NEW SPEAKER:** Someone suggests that  
11 there are no words of wisdom.

12 I simply want to thank the Commission  
13 very much for having taken the time to hear us, hear our  
14 discussions and participate with us. Above and beyond  
15 that I would like to say that I am very heartened by the  
16 statement in the speech from the throne today that the  
17 federal government is going to work to implement  
18 self-government for our peoples.

19 I hope, as many of us have emphasized  
20 in many of our sections today, that the Commission will  
21 give the strongest impetus, recommend very strongly, that  
22 this be done for the Métis people. We have already laid  
23 out essentially the process through the Métis Accord, which

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1 was agreed to formally. I hope that the Commission will  
2 go ahead, support this, and that we will move very soon  
3 to self-government.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

5 **GARY PARENTEAU, Vice-President, Métis**  
6 **Settlements General Council:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
7 My name is Gary Parenteau, Vice-President of the Métis  
8 Settlements, and I would like to make some closing comments  
9 to the people in attendance.

10 First off, the Métis Settlements General  
11 Council is thankful for the chance to take part in the  
12 Métis National Round Table. We came here because our  
13 people need to understand national issues if they are going  
14 to be part of rebuilding the Métis Nation.

15 We came also because we want the Royal  
16 Commission to clearly understand just how important land  
17 is to the future as Métis. For many years Métis leaders  
18 across Canada have been hammering home the message: Our  
19 people cannot survive without a place to call home.  
20 Unfortunately, governments have largely ignored that  
21 message. Provincial governments and federal governments  
22 have tried to duck behind arguments over who is responsible  
23 for Métis, to say there is nothing they can do.

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1                   In Alberta we have been more fortunate.  
2     The Alberta government has not tried to duck the issue.  
3     For more than half a century lands have been set aside  
4     in Alberta as Métis settlement areas for Métis to live  
5     on and govern. If Alberta can do that, so can other  
6     provinces. That is a challenge.

7                   Working as partners with the province,  
8     four years ago we signed an accord that greatly increased  
9     the security of our land, our powers of self-government  
10    and the funds available to catch up with neighbouring  
11    communities. If Alberta can do that, so can other  
12    provinces.

13                  What we have learned in the past four  
14    years is that you cannot develop your lands unless you  
15    have control of the resources. We are now moving on that  
16    front as well. Last year we signed an agreement with the  
17    province to begin discussions on the transfer of ownership  
18    of the sub-surface resources of our settlement areas.  
19    If Alberta can do that, so can other provinces.

20                  In short, do not let provincial  
21    governments tell you that it can't be done. It can if  
22    there is a will.

23                  One message that has been brought home

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1 clearly in the past three days in our many discussion groups  
2 is that land is crucial to the future of the Métis Nation.

3 We cannot rebuild the Métis Nation unless we can protect  
4 and develop a Métis land base. The land base should be  
5 protected in the Canadian Constitution and developed with  
6 revenue from the resources of those lands.

7                   At the moment the land base is small,  
8 only the Métis settlement areas of Alberta. But it will  
9 grow and it should not be too long before the Métis in  
10 the Northwest Territories have settled their land claims  
11 and have secured a land base. If those lands and the lands  
12 in Alberta can be protected and developed co-operatively,  
13 there will be a stronger base. Eventually, there will  
14 be other lands, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and we hope  
15 across the traditional Métis homeland. Then we will truly  
16 have a foundation on which to build the Métis Nation, one  
17 that includes those Métis who live on Métis government  
18 lands and those who do not. We look to you, the Royal  
19 Commission, to point governments in that direction.

20                   That is our message for this conference  
21 and that will be our message again when some of us gather  
22 at the end of this month to discuss the Métis Nation Accord.

23                   Once again, on behalf of the Métis

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1 Settlements General Council that have shared in your  
2 hospitality for the past three days, thank you. We look  
3 forward to seeing you and working with you in the future.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

5 **RAY LALIBERTE:** Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chairman.

7 I too would like to thank our Métis  
8 brothers from Alberta for coming to Saskatchewan. I hope  
9 you enjoyed your stay here. I enjoyed the sharing that  
10 was taking place and the learning that I learned in terms  
11 of the kinds of deals that you have in the settlements.

12 One of the things that I want to tell  
13 the Commission is that when we go to our final  
14 recommendations let's not forget about the injustices that  
15 were handed out to the Métis people in Canada to get us  
16 to a level playing field for our social and economic  
17 conditions on one extreme. On the other extreme let's  
18 not forget about the Métis yet unborn and the people who  
19 have to live with these types of settlements in the future:  
20 our children and their children, our grandchildren.

21 So let's keep that in mind when we make  
22 these recommendations.

23 I too would like to make a suggestion,

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1 if I could. On the final document that comes out from  
2 the Royal Commission, whenever it is made public, that  
3 the spokesperson for the Royal Commission and whoever they  
4 choose, I guess, would make the document public with our  
5 leadership, particularly the part that pertains to Métis  
6 people in Canada, so that they will be able to answer  
7 questions to whoever is there.

8 Thank you very much.

9 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. We have about  
10 five more minutes. Is there anyone else?

11 **RICHARD LAFFERTY, Northwest**

12 **Territories:** I am Richard Lafferty from the Northwest  
13 Territories.

14 I would like to thank the Métis  
15 settlements for showing up here as well. I think they  
16 contributed probably more than anybody else in the  
17 discussions and always with very interesting and firm  
18 things to say with respect to our Nation.

19 I am very saddened that there are no  
20 representatives from the eastern groups that consider  
21 themselves Métis and concerned that they are not being  
22 represented within this organization. I know they are  
23 not part of the Métis National Council but neither are

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1 the settlements and I think we could have got a lot out  
2 of them being here as well, not only for the greater number  
3 of people here but for the input they could have given.

4 I hope the Commission makes a point of getting their  
5 opinion when they are considering Métis issues.

6 Thank you.

7 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

8 Clem.

9 **CLEM CHARTIER, Métis Society of**

10 **Saskatchewan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

11 I will just introduce myself once again.

12 My name is Clem Chartier. I should also mention that  
13 about a year ago I was appointed at the Métis National  
14 Assembly as International Ambassador of the Métis Nation.

15 In that context we did not discuss much international  
16 aspects at this meeting although some reference was made  
17 to international law and some developments. It is not  
18 an oversight on our part. We want to concentrate on what  
19 is happening on the ground floor with us and our people  
20 and our traditional homeland, the Métis Nation.

21 For your information, we have been  
22 making contacts with the part of the Métis Nation that  
23 falls in the northern United States, primarily the states



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1 of Montana and North Dakota and Minnesota, which forms  
2 part of our historic Métis homeland which is part of the  
3 nation. Again the Nation is a community of people that  
4 have something in common. The people you have been hearing  
5 here at this time are people that identify with a nation,  
6 with a community of people that has a rich history. And  
7 that is who we are here today, that people. Unfortunately  
8 we do not have, as I say, those people who are living in  
9 that part of the United States. But we are working at  
10 consolidating that.

11 But we are also looking -- and we have  
12 been talking to the United Nations office in New York --  
13 to once we get organized as a Nation covering the  
14 international boundary to in fact seek consultative status  
15 as part of the mechanism of the United Nations. It is  
16 sort of the lowest rung on the ladder but at least it gets  
17 our foot in the door and we will be able to represent  
18 ourselves as a nation where we can continue to seek to  
19 get greater recognition in the community of nations  
20 throughout the world.

21 We intend on becoming more active. The  
22 Métis National Council has tended not to be overly active  
23 in the international community since about 1986, and

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1 Georges Erasmus will know some of the events surrounding  
2 that and some of the reasons why the Council has sort of  
3 pulled back the leadership.

4 In case Georges does not know, I as a  
5 person representing the Métis National Council was elected  
6 as a vice-president of the World Council Executive in  
7 December in Guatemala, so I guess the Métis Nation is  
8 offering my services to the international community of  
9 the indigenous community, and we are going to be making  
10 great inroads.

11 So the Métis Nation, as you have been  
12 hearing us over the past few days, is growing stronger  
13 and we are extending beyond the international boundary  
14 to our brothers and sisters in the northern part of the  
15 United States, and we are also interacting at a greater  
16 level with other indigenous peoples around the world.

17 Thank you.

18 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much,  
19 Clem.

20 We have time for one more and then we  
21 will have to cut it off, unfortunately.

22 Going once, twice. My second trade is  
23 an auctioneer, actually.

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1                   **SENATOR NORA RITCHIE, Saskatchewan:**

2 Thank you. I am Senator Nora Ritchie from Saskatchewan.

3                   I would like to say that I hope with these  
4 recommendations that our women and our youth and our elders  
5 are not forgotten, that there should be more input from  
6 them, especially our elders.

7                   Thank you.

8                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

9                   At this time I would like to invite Mr.  
10 Milen to wrap up.

11                   **ROB MILEN, Rapporteur:** Thank you.

12                   Jim has asked me to make my report  
13 perhaps a little shorter than might ordinarily be the case.  
14 We have all had a long day and the last thing you need  
15 to do is to hear a long summary from me.

16                   I want to talk about three themes that  
17 I saw emerging from this congregation: being fair  
18 treatment, the necessity of community involvement and a  
19 number of recommendations that have come out of the various  
20 sections to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

21                   I think the essential point that was made  
22 throughout is that the Métis are a people, and they must  
23 be dealt with as a people with inherent rights to

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1 self-government. The Métis require fair treatment by  
2 governments. They require fair treatment in an  
3 enumeration process which with community involvement and  
4 fairness means a liberal approach and it means inclusivity.

5                   Through an enumeration process the Métis  
6 can gather basic data essential to self-government along  
7 with the need and the ability to plan for the delivery  
8 of services. It also has benefits to government who need  
9 stats and other information in order to allocate funding  
10 and deliver programs. The Métis approach is fair because  
11 it is a win-win approach.

12                   Program funding by federal and  
13 provincial governments must be fair. Federal programs  
14 which provide for access on the basis of aboriginality  
15 are not all necessarily fair at this time. Some times  
16 Métis people simply do not have the ability to access them.  
17 Other times where Métis may be in the minority their  
18 position is overlooked.

19                   In order to be fair, Métis programming  
20 must be Métis specific. However, where there are programs  
21 that do involve Aboriginal people and where the Métis  
22 participate, it must be done with co-operation of the Métis  
23 and respect for them. Only then will the programming that

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1 apply to all Aboriginal peoples have an opportunity to  
2 be fair.

3                   It is fair for the federal government  
4 to recognize the rights of the Métis under 91(24) of the  
5 Constitution Act of 1867. It is only fair for the federal  
6 government to accept recognition of their responsibility  
7 now, to exercise their fiduciary responsibility, provide  
8 some equality of treatment to the Métis by providing  
9 adequate funding, and to take steps to constitutionalize  
10 or protect the rights of the Métis people.

11                   Self-government negotiations must be  
12 fair. Self-government negotiations must result in  
13 agreements that are fair to Métis communities and must  
14 set up institutions which themselves treat Métis people  
15 fairly, and Métis political institutions that are set up  
16 must treat people fairly. They must be democratic and  
17 meet the needs of people.

18                   It is only right that self-government  
19 agreements be constitutionalized. That would be fair.  
20 And it is only right that the Métis have an economic and  
21 land base and the right to be constitutionalized for that  
22 land base. Alberta has begun to make some progress with  
23 regard to the Métis settlements, and that is fair. It

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1 is now fair to other provinces to begin to follow their  
2 lead and it would be fair as well to constitutionalize  
3 the rights of the Métis agreements that have been reached  
4 in Alberta so that nothing in the future could impair them.

5

6 It is only right where self-government  
7 negotiations are reached that the agreements reached be  
8 constitutionalized; in particular funding agreements.

9 Many of you all in political organizations and service  
10 delivery organizations know that funding can fluctuate  
11 with the particular budget allocations by a government.

12 Tripartite negotiations must be fair,  
13 as must bilateral negotiations between a Métis political  
14 organization and every government.

15 Areas of jurisdiction that are  
16 negotiated must be fair. The areas of negotiation that  
17 are negotiated cannot be narrowly defined or dictated by  
18 governments.

19 As well, there was some discussion about  
20 fairer representation in larger political institutions;  
21 in city councils, in provincial legislatures and in the  
22 Parliament of Canada.

23 As well, fairness demands that where

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1 Métis people have hunting rights or wish to exercise rights  
2 such as hunting in the lands of other Aboriginal peoples  
3 that there be some negotiation and co-operation. For  
4 example, if a Métis person from Saskatchewan wishes to  
5 travel east and hunt in Algonquin lands, that fair  
6 treatment requires the consent and co-operation and  
7 negotiation of the Algonquin people.

8                   The only way to ensure fair treatment  
9 is to have community involvement. This means bottom up  
10 negotiations. This means that enumeration must be  
11 controlled by the communities. This means that political  
12 institutions must be controlled by the communities. A  
13 particular good example is the Gabriel Dumont Institute.  
14 It simply means future Métis political organizations,  
15 be it a regional Métis government, a provincial or national  
16 Métis government, as well be controlled from the bottom  
17 up.

18                   Only through community involvement will  
19 we be assured, I found, that there will be democratic  
20 institutions which will be flexible, which will exercise  
21 diversity, take direction from the people and allow for  
22 an incremental approach as communities are ready and as  
23 communities desire to take on areas of additional

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1 responsibility. It will be the communities that do that,  
2 the communities that drive the process, and the communities  
3 that will establish the parameters of the negotiations  
4 and guide their political leaders.

5                   There is a fundamental role for the Royal  
6 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to play and a number of  
7 recommendations throughout were made.

8                   First, the Royal Commission on  
9 Aboriginal Peoples can play a positive role in educating  
10 people, in educating particularly provincial governments  
11 as well about Métis history and culture. They have a real  
12 role to play.

13                   Second, the Royal Commission on  
14 Aboriginal People should examine positive experiences and  
15 models which the Métis may access, be it models for funding,  
16 financing agreements, self-government, and so on.

17                   Third, the Royal Commission on  
18 Aboriginal Peoples should study thoroughly and make  
19 recommendations regarding all aspects of the agreements  
20 on the Métis settlements. Time and time again people  
21 talked about the success of the settlements because they  
22 have a land base and they have a way of allocating the  
23 land and a way of accessing membership on those lands,



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1 and in particular people talked about the strength of the  
2 appeal process.

3                   Fourth, the Royal Commission is urged  
4 to in turn urge governments to proceed with self-government  
5 negotiations for the Métis.

6                   Fifth, the Royal Commission must take  
7 strong steps to ensure that they recognize Métis  
8 self-government in their report.

9                   The sixth theme that emerged was that  
10 the Royal Commission as part of the education process must  
11 ensure that education about Métis history and culture get  
12 into the schools and into the universities in this country.

13                   Seven, the Royal Commission on  
14 Aboriginal Peoples recognize that the Métis Nation Accord  
15 is a beginning. It is an absolute beginning to resolve  
16 and moving toward Métis self-government and that they  
17 should recommend legal enforcements of the provisions of  
18 the Métis Nation Accord.

19                   Eight, that the Métis fall within 91(24)  
20 and that the federal government must immediately exercise  
21 its fiduciary responsibilities for the Métis under section  
22 91(24).

23                   And that furthermore, the Royal

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1 Commission is in fact obliged to make this recommendation;  
2 and that if they do not, the Royal Commission must provide  
3 its specific reasons for so doing.

4                   Nine, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal  
5 Peoples should research positions regarding the positive  
6 obligations of the federal government to act on behalf  
7 of the Métis. The federal government has positive  
8 obligations, but the Métis need to be aware of exactly  
9 what the role of the federal government is and the Royal  
10 Commission can provide great assistance in this regard.

11                   Ten, that the Royal Commission on  
12 Aboriginal Peoples should seek constitutional protection  
13 and the recognition of the right to the Métis for a land  
14 base and in particular constitutionalize and make  
15 recommendations regarding constitutionalization or  
16 protection of the Métis settlement lands in Alberta and  
17 in so doing acknowledge Métis land claims, the right of  
18 a Métis to a land, water, resource and economic base.

19                   Finally, make recommendations and  
20 examine block funding and other financing mechanisms to  
21 ensure the ongoing financial and fiscal accountability  
22 of Métis self-government.

23                   In conclusion, I have been away from the

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1 Métis for a few years. It was heartening to see the changes  
2 in the discussions that the Métis had. May I say that  
3 through four First Ministers Conferences the Métis were  
4 always on the defensive. They had to fight to get into  
5 the 1982 Constitutional Conference. They had to see the  
6 Prime Minister to get there. It was a struggle through  
7 four conferences because the Métis were regarded as having  
8 no rights. They were told that they were a passing  
9 phenomena, that they were a nation once but have  
10 disappeared or have been assimilated; that they were not  
11 a distinct people; or that somehow there were three peoples  
12 in the Constitution: the Indian, the Inuit and the  
13 leftovers, and that it was the responsibility of the Métis  
14 to deal with everybody else that was disaffected somewhere  
15 else.

16 Governments recognized no rights. We  
17 can recall the last time that Prime Minister Trudeau  
18 conducted a constitutional conference and he described  
19 the Métis as being a socio-economic problem. Governments  
20 said that the Métis were not specific enough in spelling  
21 out what their rights were. In 1985 they made that  
22 assertion. But my 1987 the Métis were told that they were  
23 being too specific, that perhaps they were not being

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1 inclusive enough in dealing with other people and that  
2 the list of rights that they wanted were too inclusive.

3                   The government said that they did not  
4 know who the Métis were and when the first efforts at  
5 dealing with the issue of Métis identification were tabled  
6 in 1983, the government still said: "Now you have told  
7 us who you are. What about all these other people out  
8 there?" They continued to try to offload their  
9 responsibility for other constitutional peoples on the  
10 Métis.

11                   They also said that if inherent rights  
12 existed, they did once but they have been extinguished.

13                   I think that the Métis have made great  
14 success since 1987 because they looked forward to an inward  
15 rebuilding which I see very strongly here today. They  
16 got away in a lot of ways from meeting together and  
17 complaining about the federal government or complaining  
18 about who got what and began to involve building their  
19 own community and establishing a framework for their rights  
20 and how they wanted to live.

21                   This five years of work which has  
22 culminated here today has been sparked by Métis  
23 nationalism, a pride in Métis history, a Métis identity

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1 and a burning crusade to prove the economic and social  
2 wellbeing of people at the community level and by a desire  
3 to empower people at the community level with economic  
4 and political control over their own lives.

5 I will share with you one last passing  
6 thought.

7 In 1987 and 1988 I served as  
8 Environmental Legal Counsel to the Republic of Mozambique,  
9 which was located next to South Africa. It was a rather  
10 newly liberated country which was involved in an undeclared  
11 war with South Africa. It was a country that suffered  
12 terrible economic turmoil. My closest colleague that I  
13 worked with got blown up by a car bomb. We dealt with  
14 death around us, and we had to go to bed every night  
15 listening to cannon fire and gunfire.

16 But throughout all that there was no  
17 bitterness in the people. There were people that talked  
18 about building a nation, and about being free, about being  
19 liberated and about wanting to do something for themselves,  
20 something as individuals and something as communities.  
21 And it is a spirit that I see here now. It is not a spirit  
22 that I was able to see in the first few years after 1982  
23 because it was such a struggle for the Métis to be there

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1 and it was such a struggle for the Métis to go into meetings,  
2 to be on the defensive all the time and to defend who they  
3 are.

4                   But during these last five years you have  
5 embarked on remarkable work where you have outlined what  
6 it is that you want. You have done it without rancour  
7 and you have done it without bitterness. You have talked  
8 about fair treatment and what it was for your people.  
9 I commend you for it.

10                   As I said yesterday, beware of pink ice  
11 in the urinals. I heard no pink ice. I saw no pink ice.

12 I commend you for the work that you have done and it has  
13 been very much an honour to be here and to participate  
14 in these hearings.

15                   My next work in this will be to prepare  
16 a report for the Commission which I will share with the  
17 Métis National Council.

18                   I want to wish you your ongoing best  
19 success. But I really don't need to wish you your ongoing  
20 best success because you have control in your own hands  
21 and you have control in your own destiny. This is not  
22 a matter of luck. This is a matter of work.

23                   As I indicated yesterday, the Métis

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1 always faced tough questions. The Métis have never backed  
2 away from those questions. The Métis faced tough  
3 questions the last few days and the Métis have the answers.  
4 Your destiny is before you.

5                   As I talked about yesterday how at Oxford  
6 University that was built in the 1300s and 500 years later  
7 when they needed to replace great oak beams in part of  
8 the buildings there, that they walked out behind the  
9 university and there found the trees that had been planted  
10 a hundred years earlier just for that need, I said that  
11 a distant leader's voice and touch had connected with the  
12 future. I hope that in future generations when they look  
13 back at the work that you have established here, at the  
14 work that you have done here -- and I believe it to be  
15 true -- that your touch and your voice will connect with  
16 the future and that you will build your everlasting house  
17 for the Métis.

18                   Thank you.

19                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much, Rob.

20                   I would like to now as Mr. Erasmus, our  
21 Co-Chair, to make some closing remarks.

22                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I would like  
23 to thank everyone for sharing with us the last two days.

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1 It has been a very useful exercise. It was a nice way  
2 to conclude the consultations with the Métis. We had heard  
3 from you in the hearings and in the round tables we had  
4 on different issues. But as had been mentioned to us  
5 numerous times, it would be nice to have an event where  
6 the Métis could get together and concentrate their efforts  
7 without interference from the issues that other Aboriginal  
8 people in Canada are putting forth.

9 The good sense behind that suggestion  
10 has I think reflected itself here the last two days. It  
11 has been a very productive two days. I certainly enjoyed  
12 it. It was really nice to see people I had not seen for  
13 some time and to see everybody in the same place.

14 I want to at this time thank our Chairman  
15 for the last couple of days, Jim Bourque, who has been  
16 a good friend of myself for some time. We worked together  
17 in the North previously in other reincarnations. I  
18 enjoyed his company here over the last couple of days.  
19 I want to thank him for doing this for us.

20 I want to also thank all those people  
21 who have been working in the back rooms scribbling, people  
22 that have been recording and facilitating. It was very  
23 well done. This is one of those meetings where I think



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1 we have been ending and starting fairly closely on time.

2 It has been very well executed that way. I am quite  
3 pleased with that.

4 I also want to thank all those people  
5 who have come here from different parts of your homeland.

6 We wanted to stretch the dollar that the Commission had  
7 as far as possible for this and you certainly have assisted  
8 us in doing that. You have done things like drive here  
9 and you have shared the resources of the Commission in  
10 a way in which we have been able to have more people here  
11 than we might have otherwise. That also was very useful.

12 I hope it was as beneficial for everyone  
13 that came here as it is for us.

14 Where we are at now is that we are at  
15 an important stage, as has been mentioned earlier. The  
16 Commission's consultation like this has come to an end.

17 The research that we have commissioned is mainly in, but  
18 there is still some important stuff to come in. Much of  
19 the research that is in has to go through some peer review  
20 and so forth. But nevertheless we have begun the process  
21 of starting to look at what options there are in policy  
22 and resolutions and recommendations we will be making.

23 We are venturing into perhaps the

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1 toughest part of our work because listening to people and  
2 doing the research in some ways perhaps might be the easiest  
3 part of our work. Even though we found it quite strenuous  
4 some times to do the kind of travel we had to do and to  
5 hold hearings over long hours, and so forth, perhaps the  
6 toughest work of this Commission is still facing us.

7                   Later in the year we will hold a number  
8 of events where we will be testing out some of those ideas  
9 that we have. Once we have written out some key options  
10 on what is facing us, once we are close to the final  
11 recommendations we want to test those out. We will not  
12 be able to revisit everyone, as much as we would love to  
13 do that. That would take us another two years of hearings.

14 We are not going to be able to invite everybody in this  
15 room to those events. But we do know that there are very  
16 major organizations to work with, and yours is one of them.

17                   So we will be consulting and touching  
18 base with the key major national organizations guaranteed.

19                   In addition, we will be bringing in  
20 people that have specialties in different areas, depending  
21 on the particular policy we are looking at. We will be  
22 bringing in educator when we are looking at education.

23 We will be bringing in health workers when we are looking

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1 at health, and so forth.

2                               You can rest assured we have heard you  
3 but nevertheless we have a very tough job in front of us.

4 We have to balance out now what we have heard from  
5 Aboriginal people very earnestly telling us what it is  
6 that they wish, what kind of future they want, what kind  
7 of new relationship they wish. Obviously with all  
8 sincerity they told us how important it was that they had  
9 a land base, that they should be self-governing, how they  
10 should be healing from the pain that Aboriginal people  
11 have gone through and in many cases are still going through,  
12 and the kind of level playing field that we should all  
13 be involved in.

14                              What we need to now do is to take a look  
15 at the fact that in Canada right now we have very severe  
16 unemployment. Canadians feel that they are taxed to  
17 death, and there may be, as the Finance Minister is saying,  
18 actually an internal tax revolt going on where people are  
19 involved in what might be called an alternative economy  
20 where they are avoiding paying taxes. A tax revolt of  
21 some type is under way.

22                              And there is fear. There is fear in  
23 quarters where there never was fear before. Perhaps it

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1 is similar to what Aboriginal people have been experiencing  
2 for a long time.

3                   If we are simply going to suggest to  
4 Canadians that all that is needed is large ticket  
5 solutions, I suspect that our report will just be thrown  
6 back in our face.

7                   We have a difficult job but I guess the  
8 point we want to make is that we have heard very clearly  
9 from Aboriginal people the kind of pain they have gone  
10 through and what is needed for change.

11                  When we come out with our option we will  
12 be wanting some very sincere responses. Having gone  
13 through that process, we will more or less lock ourselves  
14 away until we as a Commission decide on what is going to  
15 be the final recommendations that we will be recommending.

16 We hope that because we have taken the time to study how  
17 other commissions have both succeeded and in some cases  
18 ended up with the report on the shelf just gathering dust,  
19 and because we have tried to take the extra time both to  
20 listen to the Aboriginal people and also to allow as many  
21 representatives of Canada at large to speak to us, and  
22 also because we hope in the next leg of what we are doing,  
23 since we involve the government and Aboriginal

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1 organizations and representatives, to take a look at the  
2 options and to advise us finally before we closet ourselves  
3 away to finish our work, that we have done what is possible  
4 to make sure that the report is successful.

5 I would like you to feel and to think  
6 that you have played an important role, because you have.

7 In some ways what we heard in the last two days was not  
8 new; in other ways it was. We have heard echoes of the  
9 same things we heard in the hearings. But what it has  
10 done is it has allowed us to really understand. It has  
11 given us a very firm foundation. We are going home to  
12 do our work clearly understanding how important the Métis  
13 Accord is, how important a land base is, how important  
14 governance for the Métis people is, how important the  
15 concept of being a collective and being a people for the  
16 Métis is, how the distinctiveness of the Métis from  
17 everyone else, including and in some ways perhaps  
18 particularly other Aboriginal people, is very clear.

19 I suspect that all of the Commissioners  
20 could do the same thing as me. We could rattle back to  
21 you what we have been hearing. I think that is what you  
22 wanted out of this process.

23 We have heard the concerns of Métis women

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1 and the last speaker before Rob gave us one of his wonderful  
2 speeches here -- I wasn't sure what he was running for  
3 -- we were told don't forget the youth, the elders, the  
4 women. That has been strongly reinforced many times and  
5 we will have a perspective that will include all of those  
6 dimensions.

7 Thank you for the wonderful two days.

8 It has been very useful and I am very glad that we did  
9 this. I am sure as Commissioners we all are.

10 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Dussault?

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Merci.

12 Georges spoke for all Commissioners so I will not repeat  
13 any of what he said.

14 I just want to stress that we feel that  
15 there is an opportunity for all Aboriginal people in this  
16 country, the Métis in particular, to really forge ahead.

17 That is the reason why the Commission is very serious  
18 in trying to meet the timetable that is set. We want to  
19 turn our report to the government early in 1995. That  
20 means we have to be finished with our deliberations at  
21 the end of this year in order to give them the best  
22 opportunity to act. We all know that during the first  
23 year of a mandate these are the best years, the most

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1 productive years to do reform.

2                   With that in mind, we would like to say  
3 again that we know there is a Métis perspective alongside  
4 of the Indian and the Inuit perspective. There are also  
5 common grounds but we will have benefited from this  
6 experience of sharing in two days in an integrated fashion  
7 clustered around those five questions. I think it gives  
8 perspective to what we heard during the hearings. It was  
9 scattered across three rounds or four rounds and also in  
10 the various provinces.

11                   I would like to thank each and every one  
12 of you for the effort you have put into the Commission.  
13 The Commission will give what was put into it and we hope  
14 that you will recognize maybe not all of your  
15 recommendations but the key ones, the central ones. We  
16 need your help. We got your help so far but the last leg  
17 of the trip will be very important. Some people will have  
18 to be together, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

19                   We have a tough balancing act to do at  
20 the end without making compromise on the key principles.

21                   At this point, as a token of our  
22 consideration and thanks to our Chairman of these  
23 consultations, I would like on behalf of the Commissioners

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1 to give a present to our friend Jim Bourque.

2 (Presentation)

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

4 At this point I would like to ask Mr.  
5 Morin to make some closing comments.

6 GERALD MORIN, President, Métis National  
7 Council: Thank you, Jim.

8 I want to thank all of the participants  
9 in this two-day Métis Nation Special Consultation. I know  
10 from going to some of the workshops and just talking to  
11 people and some of the plenary sessions as well that the  
12 participants were very active and certainly expressed  
13 their point of view.

14 I would like to thank all of you -- our  
15 people, the government representatives, the academics and  
16 all of the visitors -- for participating and contributing  
17 your point of view. I think the success in your  
18 participation has made this two-day event a very successful  
19 one, both from the point of view of the Métis Nation and  
20 also the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

21 I also want to thank the Royal Commission  
22 for finding the resources and taking the time to be with  
23 us here in the Métis homeland to talk about issues which



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1 are important to our people. I want to thank you very  
2 much for your participation and your dedication and your  
3 commitment.

4 I know that you have a very, very  
5 difficult job ahead of you, and you have worked very hard  
6 in the past couple of years. But I thank you very much  
7 for your contribution.

8 As well of course I want to thank the  
9 Métis National Council and all of the provincial  
10 associations, all of our people who made it possible and  
11 I guess both from the Métis National Council and the Royal  
12 Commission. Of course I want to thank the staff as well.

13 I know that the staff have worked very hard in the past  
14 few weeks and months to make this happen. So thank you  
15 very much.

16 As I said yesterday in our opening  
17 remarks, I am particularly happy and proud with the  
18 participation from all of the members or representatives  
19 from all of our peoples of the Métis Nation. I was very  
20 happy to see the different Métis associations from British  
21 Columbia. They were certainly welcome and participated.

22

23 As well, the Métis Nation of Ontario,

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1 the newly founded Métis Nation of Ontario and their new  
2 President Ron Swain, we have been very supportive of them.

3 I think our people in that province are well on their  
4 way to organizing around their nationhood and we certainly  
5 are with you. Thank you very much for participating.

6 As well the Métis settlements, it was  
7 one of the rare times that we had participation by the  
8 settlements in one of our forums. They certainly made  
9 a contribution here and we look forward to involving them  
10 in future forums and future processes along with other  
11 members of the Métis Nation.

12 As well, I had a very interesting  
13 discussion over lunch with many Métis women's associations  
14 from all over the Métis homeland. They certainly  
15 expressed a desire to come together and work towards our  
16 common objectives and our common vision as a people and  
17 as a nation. That was very encouraging.

18 To me, as some of the other previous  
19 speakers have indicated as well, I think we certainly have  
20 a strong and vibrant Métis Nation, and I think it is  
21 something that we should be very proud of.

22 I am confident, very confident, because  
23 of the strength and the inner will that our people have

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1 not only expressed in the past two days but in the past  
2 few months and past few years, and because of the strength  
3 of that inner will and because of their conviction and  
4 their commitment, I am confident that we are going to  
5 achieve our objectives and achieve our aspirations within  
6 Canada.

7                               We had signed a Memorandum of  
8 Understanding last year between the Métis National Council  
9 and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and at that  
10 time of course there was some concern, as has been  
11 acknowledged by the Royal Commission, on whether there  
12 was a proper discussion and dialogue taking place with  
13 respect to Métis Nation issues. We immediately set to  
14 work on that and of course the result of those discussions  
15 that came out of it was the Memorandum of Understanding  
16 between ourselves and the Royal Commission.

17                               Since that time I think we have had a  
18 fairly good working relationship. The lines of  
19 communication have certainly been open. I have told them  
20 before -- and this is the last time I will tell them --  
21 I don't mind him calling me at home but on a Good Friday  
22 at 7 o'clock in the morning I think Georges Erasmus is  
23 going a little too far with this communication stuff.

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1                   But I think we have had a fairly good  
2 working relationship and I think this Métis Nation Special  
3 Consultation is an example of how that MOU has worked and  
4 how we have been able to make progress together. It does  
5 not mean that we have always agreed. We have disagreed  
6 at times and I am sure we will continue to disagree. But  
7 I am sure there is a genuine desire and commitment to work  
8 together to ensure that the issues and concerns of the  
9 Métis Nation are brought forward.

10                   I think this two-day event has been  
11 particularly good for the Royal Commission because they  
12 have seen first hand the strength of the concerns and  
13 convictions of our people. Our people have been very vocal  
14 and they will leave here after this two days with the  
15 impression that we are certainly very active and we are  
16 very much interested in assuring that our issues are  
17 addressed.

18                   I also want to assure the Royal  
19 Commission that we will do everything within our power  
20 to help you out to make sure that our issues are being  
21 brought forward. With respect to the report and the  
22 recommendations which will go to Parliament I guess early  
23 next year, we very much want to see -- and I think that

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1 has been expressed very clearly -- that our issues, that  
2 the Métis Nation concerns and aspirations come out loud  
3 and clear in that final report.

4                   Hopefully the new federal Liberal  
5 government is on the right track. They have only been  
6 in power for a very short period of time and it is very  
7 difficult to get an accurate indicator on whether they  
8 are going to follow through, for example, with respect  
9 to their promises in the red book. But I certainly hope  
10 they will. There are some positive indicators there.

11                   With respect to the throne speech which  
12 happened this afternoon, I just want to read part of that  
13 speech -- not the whole thing, of course, but part of it  
14 which applies to us as Aboriginal peoples.

15                   In the throne speech this afternoon it  
16 says:

17 "The Government will forge a new partnership with  
18                   Aboriginal peoples, particularly  
19                   in respect of the implementation  
20                   of the inherent right of  
21                   self-government. Legislation to  
22                   further the implementation of  
23                   northern claims settlements will

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1 be put before Parliament."

2 As I said yesterday, one of those claims  
3 which will be put forward will be the claims of the Dené  
4 and Métis people in the Sahtu Region of the Northwest  
5 Territories.

6 That is very encouraging, and we hope  
7 that the federal government mean what they say and will  
8 follow through with that commitment that they have made  
9 not only in their red book but now also in the throne speech  
10 as part of the federal government. That part is  
11 encouraging.

12 I guess one of the things I am a little  
13 concerned about with respect to that throne speech is it  
14 says:

15 "The Government will allocate additional funds for the  
16 support of post-secondary  
17 education for First Nations and  
18 will develop an Aboriginal  
19 head-start program."

20 When we are talking about post-secondary  
21 education and our young people and the human resources  
22 that we have to offer within the Métis Nation, I think  
23 it is very important that the federal government not deal

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1 with only one group of Aboriginal people but that they  
2 deal with all of us fairly and justly. When it comes to  
3 the issue of post-secondary education, I think the needs  
4 are very great within the Métis community.

5 I hope that they follow through on  
6 post-secondary education, as they had indicated in their  
7 red book, with all Aboriginal peoples.

8 All in all there are some things which  
9 cause us concern, which I just read out to you, but there  
10 are also some very positive indicators as well.

11 Another positive indicator is that when  
12 I met last week with the federal Métis interlocutor Ann  
13 McLellan, she made the commitment at that meeting that  
14 the federal government will participate on January 31st  
15 in Toronto in a meeting between Métis leaders and  
16 provincial Aboriginal Affairs Ministers to discuss a Métis  
17 Nation process and a Métis Nation Accord.

18 So that as well is a very positive  
19 indicator.

20 I think with respect to that commitment  
21 in the throne speech on inherent rights, the federal  
22 government and the provinces as well can follow through  
23 with their commitments immediately by negotiating with

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1 us in good faith on the Métis Nation Accord on January  
2 31st. As has been indicated, the Métis Nation Accord is  
3 an absolute start. It is a national framework by which  
4 we as a Métis Nation can move ahead with the federal  
5 government.

6 So we are hopeful that we can leave there  
7 with a process which will eventually lead to that legal  
8 and binding Métis Nation Accord which can ultimately make  
9 a difference in the lives of our people.

10 Another issue which we are going to be  
11 adding on the agenda on January 31st, of course, is going  
12 to be the issue of hunting rights.

13 The second specific and concrete way in  
14 which federal and provincial governments can move ahead  
15 immediately with the Métis Nation is to sit down with us.

16 We feel that we have that right. It is protected in the  
17 Constitution and it has been affirmed in the courts. We  
18 could go out there, as far as we are concerned right now,  
19 and start hunting as much as we want. But we feel that  
20 the responsible thing to do is to go back to our own  
21 governments and develop our own policies and guidelines  
22 and our own legislation on how we want to regulate our  
23 right, keeping in mind conservation measures.

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1                   As well we have invited the provincial  
2 governments and federal government to sit down with us  
3 and negotiate co-management agreements so that we can  
4 co-operate with respect to the harvesting of wildlife  
5 resources and give some direction to our people in terms  
6 of how we can go out there and exercise our inherent right  
7 to self-government.

8                   Those are two concrete examples of how  
9 the federal and provincial governments can move ahead with  
10 us immediately.

11                   I think the recommendations and some of  
12 the things that came out at this two-day special  
13 consultation hopefully will give some momentum to that.  
14 That is very encouraging.

15                   Again I want to thank everybody. I want  
16 to thank the Royal Commission, our people and all of the  
17 people who participated, and I certainly hope, and I am  
18 somewhat optimistic, that we will be able to make some  
19 progress in the next few months. When the final report  
20 is tabled by the Royal Commission and their  
21 recommendations, I hope that our views will be heard loud  
22 and clear. And I certainly hope that the Parliament of  
23 Canada and the provinces will adopt those recommendations

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1 and work with our people so that we can start actually  
2 implementing the inherent right of self-government in our  
3 communities. It is that that we have to keep in mind.

4 I always remind people that we are here  
5 gathered today and we are engaging in this exercise with  
6 the Royal Commission and similarly on January 31st with  
7 the Ministers to ensure that we can bring about social  
8 and economic justice to our people in our communities  
9 because they are the ones who are suffering and they are  
10 the ones who must be kept in mind as we try to make progress.

11 The sooner we do that for our people, with the help of  
12 everyone else, the better it is going to be for our people  
13 in our communities, and I think the better it will be for  
14 Canada as well.

15 Thank you for much for your  
16 participation. I wish all of you well in your journeys  
17 home.

18 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Before Father  
19 Guy Lavallée says the prayer in the form of a speech or  
20 a speech in the form of a prayer, I would like to ask him  
21 to come forward, and I would like to give him a small token  
22 of our consideration on behalf of the Commissioners.

23 **(Presentation)**

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1                   **FATHER GUY LAVALLÉE:** Thank you very  
2 much.

3                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** On behalf of myself as  
4 Chair I want to thank all of you for your co-operation  
5 over the last two days. Your prompt attendance to the  
6 workshops and your prompt attendance back here made it  
7 all worthwhile.

8                   It was a good exercise. I will say again  
9 that I am really honoured to be asked to chair this session.  
10 It was a opportunity for me to meet with a lot of old  
11 acquaintances that I worked with years ago like Jim St.  
12 Clair, Harry Daniels. A lot of the stuff we were talking  
13 about we talked about in 1980, 1982 and 1983. Eventually  
14 maybe something will come of it.

15                   Now we will hear our closing prayer.

16                   **(Closing Prayer)**

17                   **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

18                   This then concludes this round of  
19 discussions. I wish you all a safe journey home and we  
20 will see you again.

21 --- Whereupon the hearing adjourned at 5:15 p.m.