

TRANSLATION  
FROM FRENCH

**STUDY ON THE VISION OF SELF-GOVERNMENT  
OF THE MONTAGNAIS NATION  
IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
(Final Report)**

**SUBMITTED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**

**BY  
THE MONTAGNAIS NATION**

**PRODUCED BY THE  
INSTITUT CULTUREL ET ÉDUCATIF MONTAGNAIS  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.Introduction .....	3
2.Mandate .....	4
3.Portrait of the Montagnais communities .....	4
3.1. Geographic location .....	4
3.2. Betsiamites .....	5
3.3. Mingan .....	6
3.4. Olamen .....	7
3.5. Natashquan .....	8
3.6. Pakua Shipi .....	9
3.7. Schefferville .....	10
3.8. Essipit .....	11
3.9. Uashat Mak Maniutenam .....	12
3.10. Mashteuiatsh .....	14
4.Consultation report .....	16
4.1. Problems encountered .....	16
4.2. Participation rate .....	16
4.3. Procedure .....	18
4.4. Leading themes of the study .....	19
5.Analysis report .....	20
5.1. Procedure .....	20
5.2. CULTURE .....	20
5.2.1. The Montagnais culture: definition and understanding .....	20
5.2.2. Culture: importance of its transparency and transmission .....	24
5.2.3. Montagnais cultural autonomy: why and how? .....	26
5.2.4. Funding our culture .....	31

5.3. EDUCATION .....	33
5.3.1. Education: definition and understanding .....	33
5.3.2. The place of traditional education and Montagnais culture in the present educational system .....	35
5.3.3. Montagnais autonomy in education: why and how? .....	38
5.3.4. The funding problem .....	42
 6. Legal and social framework of self-government in the fields of education and culture ..	43
6.1. The unavoidable link between aboriginal self-government and the comprehensive land claims of aboriginal peoples .....	43
6.2. Cultural relations between Natives and non-Natives .....	44
6.3. The need to restore public opinion .....	45
6.4. The real will of governments to negotiate in good faith .....	47
 7. External factors which may influence or limit the process and extent of the self-government of the Montagnais nation in the fields of education and culture .....	48
 8. Approval of the study's findings .....	49
 9. Comments and recommendations .....	50
 10. Documents and works consulted .....	52

## **1.Introduction**

The Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais (ICEM) is particularly proud and pleased to submit to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and to the Montagnais Nation the final report for the Study on the Vision of Self-government of the Montagnais Nation in the Fields of Education and Culture.

Following the filing of the initial report last June, the present report thus constitutes the final stage toward the summary yet concrete definition of the concept of self-government in the areas of education and culture.

It is appropriate at this time to point out that the content of this final report does not seek to delimit all essential aspects within an exhaustive definition of the general concept of aboriginal self-government. It seeks only to illustrate, as required by the mandate, the Montagnais Nation's "vision" of self-government in the fields of education and culture.

This final report will allow the Montagnais Nation and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to analyse thoroughly the findings of the study, and to review certain elements of its content which might require special attention.

We wish you pleasant reading, and hope that this document will be to your satisfaction and arouse your increased interest in this matter.

## **2.Mandate**

Following approval of the study plan submitted by ICEM to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, ICEM was assigned a mandate to produce the study on the self-government of the Montagnais Nation in the fields of education and culture.

After a meeting in February 1993 with the Commission's project co-ordinator, it was agreed that ICEM would focus its study on the two aspects for which it is responsible, namely education and culture.

It is important to point out that this study was produced within the time limits and financial constraints imposed by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

To date, we consider that ICEM has met its objectives and those of the Commission. In attempting to reflect the vision of self-government of the Montagnais Nation in the fields of education and culture, the findings of this study confirm that the objectives set have been achieved.

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## **3.Portrait of the Montagnais communities**

### 3.1. Geographic location

[space]

### 3.2. Betsiamites

Territory: Reserve of Betsiamites

Federal riding: Charlevoix

Provincial riding: Saguenay

Area: 25,538.57 hectares

Population: 2,449; Men: 1,182  
Women: 1,267

In the territory: 2,175  
Outside the territory: 274  
On Crown land: 0

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French

History: In 1861, the Montagnais exchanged the Reserve of Manicouagan for 25,500 hectares of land at the mouth of the Bersimis river. In 1981, the Reserve of Bersimis was renamed the "Reserve of Betsiamites".

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and twelve councillors, elected according to procedures specified in the *Indian Act*.

Economic activity:		<u>Jobs</u>
	Logging	69
	Trapping	45
	Businesses and services	35

Businesses:	Forestry development	Grocery store
	Bars	Heavy machinery
	Post offices	General store
	Canteens	Hardware store
	Construction	Restaurant
	Convenience stores	Clothing

Schools: Nussim school (elementary) Uashkaikan school (secondary grades 8 to 11)

Total student population: 764  
Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 1,079

### 3.3. Mingan

Territory: Reserve of Mingan

Federal riding: Manicouagan

Provincial riding: Duplessis

Area: 3,887.82 hectares

Population: 357; Men: 164  
Women: 193

In the territory: 347  
Outside the territory: 9  
On Crown land: 1

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French

History: The village was founded in 1963 after the transfer of provincial lands to the federal government.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and four councillors, elected according to local custom.

Economic activity:	<u>Jobs</u>
Handicrafts	25
Trapping	20
Tourism	5
Businesses and services	4

Businesses: Handicrafts  
Community store  
Fishing  
Outfitting

Schools: Teuakan school (preschool, elementary, secondary grades 8 and 9)

Total student population: 126  
Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 158

### 3.4. Olamen

Territory: Reserve of La Romaine

Federal riding: Manicouagan

Provincial riding: Duplessis

Area: 40.47 hectares

Population: 723; Men: 364  
Women: 359

In the territory: 706  
Outside the territory: 8  
On Crown land: 9

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French

History: The land was ceded to the federal government in 1955 by the province and received reserve status in 1956. The aboriginal people living in Saint-Augustin settled in La Romaine in 1961, leaving again in 1963.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and seven councillors, elected according to local custom.

Economic activity:	<u>Jobs</u>
Handicrafts	75
Trapping	75
Outfitting and tourism	5
Businesses and services	4

Businesses:	Handicrafts	Convenience stores
	Boutique	Outfitting
	Hairdresser	Transport

Schools: Olamen school (preschool, elementary, secondary grades 8 and 9)

Total student population: 229

Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 340



### 3.5. Natashquan

Territory: Reserve of Natashquan

Federal riding: Manicouagan

Provincial riding: Duplessis

Area: 20.63 hectares

Population: 573; Men: 276  
Women: 297

In the territory: 535  
Outside the territory: 38  
On Crown land: 0

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French

History: The federal government acquired 8.30 hectares in 1952 for the use of the Indians of Natashquan. Two subsequent acquisitions brought the territory to its present size.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and four councillors, elected according to local custom.

Economic activity:	<u>Jobs</u>
Trapping	25
Businesses and services	16
Handicrafts	15
Tourism	15

Businesses:	Handicrafts	Community store
	Construction	Outfitting
	Heavy machinery	Taxi and ambulance

Schools:	Uashaikan school (secondary grades 8 to 12)	Uauitshitun school (preschool, elementary, secondary grades 8 and 9)
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Total student population: 179

Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 285

### 3.6. Pakua Shipi

Territory: Saint-Augustin settlement

Federal riding: Manicouagan

Provincial riding: Duplessis

Area: 4.47 hectares

Population: 132; Men: 69  
Women: 63

In the territory: 1  
Outside the territory: 2  
On Crown land: 129

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French, English

History: In 1961 the aboriginal people of St-Augustin settled in La Romaine;  
they left in 1963 to set up another community at Pakua Shipi.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and four councillors, elected according to local custom.

Economic activity:		<u>Jobs</u>
	Trapping	30
	Handicrafts	25
	Businesses and services	3

Businesses: Handicrafts  
Community store

Schools: Pakua Shipi school (preschool, elementary, secondary grades 8 and 9)

Total student population: 70  
Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 73

### 3.7. Schefferville

Territory: Reserves of Matimekosh and Lac-John

Federal riding: Manicouagan

Provincial riding: Duplessis

Area: 15.91 hectares (Matimekosh)  
23.5 hectares (Lac-John)

Population: 546; Men: 280  
Women: 266

In the territory: 519  
Outside the territory: 27  
On Crown land: 0

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French

History: The territory of Lac-John was transferred from the provincial government to the federal government in 1960. In 1968 Quebec also transferred to Canada what is today the Reserve of Matimekosh.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and four councillors, elected according to local custom.

Economic activity:		<u>Jobs</u>
	Handicrafts	25
	Trapping	25
	Businesses and services	12

Businesses: Aquaculture	Convenience store
Handicrafts	Heavy machinery
Machine shop	Plumber
Bar	Service station
Bakery	

Schools: Kanatamat Tshitipetitamunu school  
(preschool, elementary, secondary grades 8 to 12)

Total student population: 207  
Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 270

### 3.8. Essipit

Territory: Reserve of Les Escoumins

Federal riding: Charlevoix

Provincial riding: Saguenay

Area: 38.50 hectares

Population: 341; Men: 161  
Women: 180

In the territory: 186  
Outside the territory: 155  
On Crown land: 0

Principal languages spoken: French, Montagnais

History: The federal government purchased the territory in 1892 for the use of the Indians of Les Escoumins.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and three councillors, elected according to local custom.

Economic activity:		<u>Jobs</u>
	Businesses and services	15
	Tourism	15
	Handicrafts	12
	Logging	8

Businesses:	Handicrafts	Hotel
	Camping site	Commercial fishing
	Convenience stores	Outfitting
	Logging	

Schools: No school on the territory

Total student population: 65  
Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 111

### 3.9. Uashat Mak Maniutenam

Territory: Reserves of Uashat and Maliotenam

Federal riding: Manicouagan

Provincial riding: Duplessis

Area: 108.31 hectares (Uashat)  
499.28 hectares (Maliotenam)

Population: 2,263; Men: 1,077  
Women: 1,186

In the territory: 1,814  
Outside the territory: 449  
On Crown land: 0

Principal languages spoken: Montagnais, French

History: Maliotenam is a territory that was acquired by the federal government in 1948 and designated a reserve the following year. The territory of Uashat was transferred to the federal government in 1925.

Band Council: The band council is composed of a chief and nine councillors, elected according to procedures specified in the *Indian Act*.

Economic activity:	<u>Jobs</u>
Businesses and services	40
Logging	30
Trapping	30
Handicrafts	6

Businesses:Landscaping

Convenience stores  
Outfitting  
Handicrafts  
Grocery store  
Restaurant  
Camping site  
Canoe making  
Video arcade  
Shopping centre  
Manufacture of wood stoves

Management services  
Hairdresser  
Logging  
Service stations  
Construction  
Hotel  
Translation  
Fashion  
Heavy machinery  
Air and road transport

Schools: Manikatenish school (secondary grades 8 to 12)

Tsheshteshenu school (preschool, elementary)

Johnny Pilot school (preschool, elementary)

Total student population: 607

Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 976



Service stations  
Post office  
Furniture  
Taxi  
Camping site  
Motel and camping site  
Taxidermist  
Hairdresser  
Photographer  
Translation  
Construction  
Plumber  
Transport  
Sailing school  
Editing and publishing  
Sale of household appliances

Schools: Amisk school (preschool, elementary, and secondary grade 8)

Total student population: 694

Student-age population (between the ages of 5 and 24): 1,096

Note: This data is taken from the *Quebec Indian Community Guide* (1990), Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Quebec Region.



## 4. Consultation report

### 4.1. Problems encountered

For this consultation phase, the main problem encountered was without doubt the low participation rate (see point 4.2).

It is clear that the time allotted to carry out this consultation was definitely too short. A minimum average of two days' consultation per community would have been desirable. But in view of the budget available, it would have been difficult to do more.

One resource person alone cannot conduct an effective and complete study.  
A minimum team of two or three investigators would have been necessary.

The fact of consulting with regard to two aspects, such as culture and education, poses certain difficulties in terms of the procedure and organizational aspect of the meetings.

Finally, the planning and logistics of the meetings were weak points in the consultation process. Here too, this was primarily due to a timetable that was too short.

### 4.2. Participation rate

Pakua Shipi = 0 persons interviewed\*

Natashquan = 6 persons interviewed

3 on culture and 3 on education, including 2 non-Natives on education

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\* No-one could be interviewed at Pakua Shipi because everyone had left on the caribou hunt. Follow-up (in the form of interviewing resource persons) was assigned to Guy Lambert and Bruno Bellefleur.

La Romaine	=	4 persons interviewed 2 on culture (1 elder and 1 policy adviser), 1 on education, and 1 policy adviser)
Uashat mak Maniutenam	=	4 persons interviewed 4 on culture (including 1 elder, 1 policy adviser and 1 resource person)
OLM**=	=	5 persons interviewed 1 on culture (an elder), 3 on education, 1 delegated person and the Office head
Mingan =	=	5 persons interviewed 3 on culture (including 1 policy adviser), 2 on education (including 1 non-Native)
Schefferville	=	6 persons interviewed 1 on culture (an elder) and 5 on education
Les Escoumins	=	1 person interviewed 1 on education
Betsiamites	=	7 persons interviewed 4 on culture, 3 on education (including 1 policy adviser)
Mashteuiatsh	=	8 persons interviewed 2 on culture (1 elder and 1 policy adviser) and 6 on education

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\*\* Office de la Langue Montagnaise

**Total = 46 persons interviewed**

20 on culture (including 5 elders, 4 policy advisers and 1 resource person), 23 on education (including 3 non-Natives and 1 policy adviser), 1 policy adviser, 1 delegated person, and 1 head (OLM).

### **4.3. Procedure**

Initially, a discussion paper was developed and approved as a consultation tool. This was designed for the purpose of provoking the participants' reaction and spurring discussion on various aspects pertaining to the vision of self-government in the fields of education and culture.

This discussion paper featured two sections and 30 questions. Each question was accompanied by a statement designed to prompt a reaction from the participants. Each section, one on culture and the other on education, was divided into two parts. The first part, very general in nature, was intended to take stock of our individual and collective understanding of culture and education. The second part focussed specifically on questions and statements the objective of which was to make this concept of self-government clear and/or visible--first of all, in education and culture, and second, with respect to the entire project of aboriginal self-government.

As agreed, this discussion paper was to remain flexible and non-restrictive, so that it could be constantly adapted to the changing nature of the consultation. It was therefore used "as is" during the first meetings. Subsequently, considering the adjustments to be made to our interviews in terms of time and logistics, we converted this tool into a reference document, preferring to make greater use of the information collected in the first meetings as a way of prompting discussion and exchange.

We then proceeded by means of open discussions, of a round table nature, on various aspects of self-government. The result was that by the final phase of consultation we required this working tool very little or not at all.

Such an approach had the advantage of putting people at ease during our meetings, but had the disadvantage of making these meetings very difficult to conduct and follow when we had to "direct" the discussion while at the same time taking the notes essential to the consultation report.

Finally, to open each interview, explanations were offered as to the nature of our mandate and study, potential use of the study's findings, and the process of approving those findings by the participating communities.

#### 4.4. Leading themes of the study

1. Authority over education and culture must be exercised at the grass roots, that is, by the Montagnais communities.
2. If the structure acquires one or more higher levels, those levels will have either delegated authority or delegated responsibilities, and their roles must be strictly representative and concerned with dialogue, co-ordination and the negotiation of governmental agreements.
3. Local authority for education could take the form of a "local Montagnais school board" in which decision-making power lies with the parents.
4. Local cultural authority could take the form of a local cultural council or a local cultural association with decision-making powers.
5. If the structure recognizes regional associations such as Mamit Innuat and Mamuitun, the role of those associations will be strictly limited to service delivery; they will have no decision-making power.
6. The Council(s) of Elders must be incorporated and recognized in the government structure and play a predominant role in educational and cultural policies and decisions.
7. For most communities, it is desirable for education and culture to be represented by autonomous local entities.
8. "Educational and cultural authorities" must be included in the overall governmental structure.
9. A cultural policy for the entire Montagnais Nation must be developed and defined, but it must initially proceed from the communities.
10. The notion of an educational association in the form of a "Nation school board" is an interesting idea, but one difficult to envisage or visualize in the short term.
11. Development of a comprehensive education plan for the Montagnais Nation should be given priority.
12. The creation of cultural sectors through all of the band councils must be undertaken and promoted.
13. The regional cultural committee must eventually be recognized and see its level of authority confirmed by becoming the regional cultural council of the Montagnais Nation.

## **5. Analysis report**

### **5.1. Procedure**

The process used to analyse all of the information collected involved a number of stages, so as to identify the elements essential for an analysis that was professional and as objective as possible.

These stages were as follows:

- Systematic compilation of all information collected;
  - Identification of main themes on the basis of the initial discussion paper used in the consultation phase;
  - Organization of all data according to appropriate themes;
  - Identification of secondary themes to be included in the analysis report;
  - Development of a work plan for analysis of the information collected;
  - Analysis of the information.

## **5.2. CULTURE**

### **5.2.1. The Montagnais culture: definition and understanding**

#### **1. The Montagnais identity**

Clearly, the geographic context of a nation such as the Montagnais demands a certain "coherence" from the outset in our approach to our definition of culture. Our understanding, at once diversified and uniformly deep, leads us to believe that all of the Montagnais communities share a common culture.

The data collected during our consultation confirms for us, in a way, that the Montagnais culture draws its source from the knowledge of the elders. This knowledge is directly related to the ancestral territory.

For most of the communities consulted, culture must be the reflection of a community; it must reflect our uniqueness. In a context where everything points to the persistence of major problems between young people and elders, and hence where cultural transmission is increasingly complex, the perception of this cultural uniqueness is not as obvious as one might think at first glance.

To counter this situation, we must therefore initiate a veritable return to our roots, to the values which formerly governed our relations between individuals, communities or nations. But this return must take the present context into consideration, and not ignore the entire evolution through which the Montagnais communities have thus far passed.

The Montagnais language is a major vehicle of culture, and in that capacity its use and mastery are a source of hope for many of the people consulted. The Montagnais language has also gone through a process of evolution. Montagnais culture is today characterized by the traditional language and the Montagnais of today, which is spoken mainly by the young people in our communities.

On this subject, it is important to some that local dialects be respected. Since these have been fashioned by geographical characteristics, they reflect both the differences between the communities and the common source of our language, and hence our culture.

From this perspective, some see it necessary for us to redefine ourselves culturally. We have to review our traditional concepts and bring them up to date, without distorting them. This redefinition must focus on our pride in being Innu. But the fundamental bases of our culture must remain the land and traditional activities. Our identity is defined by this knowledge of the land and by authentic Montagnais history, the history of the land, its use, and its traditional and present-day occupation. The Montagnais cultural identity is thus achieved through knowledge of our origins, by knowing where we come from.

## 2. Community dynamic

The swift evolution of our communities has forced them to adapt to new concepts and new ways of managing time, business and community development. The transfer of many programs and services now allows most communities to enjoy a greater autonomy.

On the other hand, aboriginal management of these programs and services has also created a veritable local dependency. This dependency on band services and programs considerably restricts the lifestyle of the members of the community. Increasingly less use is made of the land. The community is faced with growing social problems caused mainly by the inactivity and instability of our young. Despite their efforts to counter this trend, social workers seem imprisoned in a system that is not their own.

For many communities, the solution seems to lie in the introduction of a true community dynamic, characterized by individual and collective responsibility for the development of the community. The involvement of all community members in development and also in the identification and implementation of solutions is leading us to rethink our internal operating procedures.

To this end, certain members of the community must provide leadership, and instigate this change toward a collective future. Each member, group and local organization must have a place within a "common global structure" which allows room for community involvement and creativity.

### 3. Affirmation of culture

Affirming one's culture primarily means identifying oneself with a community and being part of it. To do this, the communities must encourage and develop the feeling of belonging to the community and to the Montagnais nation.

Certain participants stressed to us the importance of regaining our confidence and our cultural self-worth within a media context that is not favourable to aboriginal people.

Affirmation of culture must also be translated into concrete action. We must live our culture every day and not just on the occasion of certain specific events. We must also move beyond the local framework and get to know other communities better. Therefore situations of exchange and sharing must be created from one community to another.

As we shall see a little later, affirmation of our culture must also be transparent in our local and external organizations. These organizations must be steeped in a spirit proper to their culture, in an Innu spirit.

Finally, the affirmation of our culture must extend beyond the borders of the community. We must demonstrate that our culture is alive and more dynamic than ever. In doing so, however, we must be careful in determining how this cultural image will be projected to the outside.

### 4. The territorial concept

Clearly, one of the common points for all of the communities is the land--the land as locus of knowledge, the land as locus of cultural transmission, the land as locus of learning, the land as preferred locus for the protection and promotion of culture.

Increased use of the land as a resource for cultural transmission and education seems to be the pivot of all action on the cultural front.

One of the points raised is that our behaviour differs according to whether our activities take place in the territory or in the community. This point seems to us extremely important, in so far as it demonstrates the influence exerted on our behaviour and actions depending on whether we are in the territory, in a community setting, or in an urban setting.

This leads us to conceive of the territory in a way that will integrate both the community and our external activity in promoting and developing our culture.

From this perspective, the territorial concept (see Illustration A) that is reflected in the cultural development policy of the community of Mashteuiatsh seems to us a palpable demonstration of the preferred areas of intervention.

#### Illustration A

Ancestral territory

Present hunting grounds

Community

Present hunting grounds

Ancestral territory

First of all, we have the community, the local territory where certain activities promoted by the community are planned, co-ordinated and implemented.

Next comes the territory covering the present hunting and trapping sectors of the Montagnais. For most communities, these are beaver preserves.

Third and finally, there is ancestral territory, as defined by the study on land use and occupation that was done by the Attikamek-Montagnais Council [CAM: Conseil des Atikamekw et des Montagnais] in 1981. This land also involves elements which relate to the world outside the community (urban environment).



## 5.2.2. Culture: importance of its transparency and transmission

### 1. The youth/elders problem

This consultation of Montagnais communities, like many previous consultations or studies, once again confirms this rupture between the aboriginal youth and the elders of a community or nation (see Illustration B).

#### Illustration B

YOUTH

ELDERS

CONFLICT

SOLUTION

RECOGNITION OF THE ELDERS' KNOWLEDGE

Those consulted are very conscious of this problem. For them, it is essential and urgent first of all to re-establish this connection, and then to strengthen relations between young people and elders.

Much hope is thus placed in the community workers, and still more in our aboriginal leaders, so that they may take concrete action and ensure that our young people have a future that is equal to their ambitions. We also have confidence in our Montagnais youngsters. Young people are today increasingly conscious of this problem, which systematically disrupts the relationship between young people and elders, and consequently inhibits cultural transmission.

For many, the Montagnais territory and language are the solution to this problem. Since the culture is a product of the land and the native language refers constantly to the land, these two elements are fundamental to real cultural transmission.

## 2. The family: nucleus of cultural transmission

Traditionally, the family was the centre of community life for most aboriginal nations. Today, for various reasons, the family in practice no longer holds this special position: its role has been considerably changed through the years, leaving more responsibility to such community institutions as the school or band council.

For many, no local agency or entity other than the family ought to appropriate the role of transmitter of the Montagnais culture. It is clear that in the context of a community dynamic we all have a cultural role and cultural responsibilities, but the family must remain the nucleus of cultural transmission.

For it to play this role, we must review our organizations and our present concepts so as to make them consistent with the community reality and create new approaches founded on the traditional way of life. Involvement of the family, parents, youth and elders must be ensured at all stages of the development and learning of young people (see Illustration F, page 34, Education).

## 3. The use and mastery of language in cultural transmission

For many, true cultural transmission is achieved primarily through the use and mastery of one's native tongue. The Montagnais language is characterized by two forms of expression: the traditional language or language of hunting, and a more contemporary language influenced by numerous aspects which have marked the evolution of our communities.

Since the former is peculiar to the elders of the community and the latter is the language used daily by most young people, it is extremely urgent to regain some degree of balance so that the traditional language may be preserved and at the same time made accessible to young people.

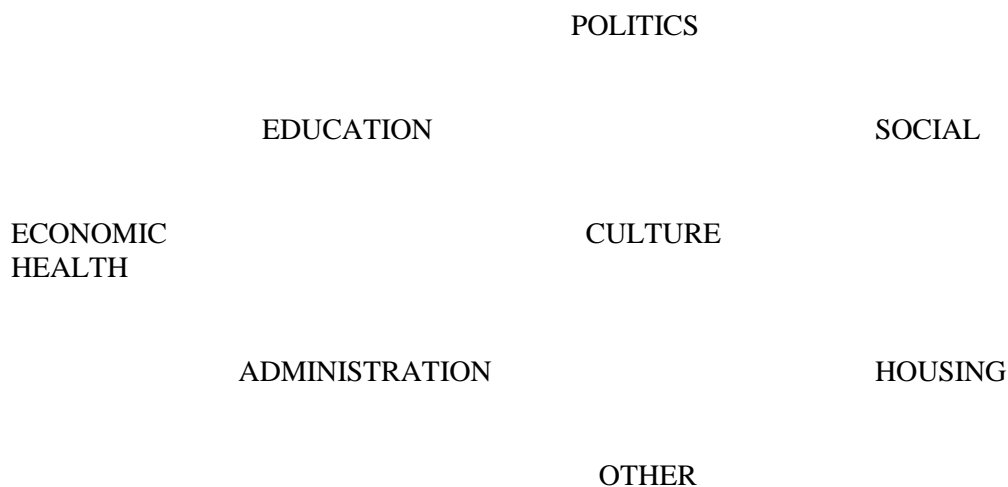
As Montagnais tradition is characterized chiefly by oral transmission from generation to generation, the use and mastery of the language becomes the preferred vehicle for the transmission of knowledge relating to the wisdom of the elders of the Montagnais Nation.

## 4. A Montagnais culture, a Montagnais community, a Montagnais nation

Many people expressed a desire to see, to feel and to live their culture throughout the community. If the community is culturally strong, this force should be perceptible where the people live.

Culture must therefore be at the centre of everything. It must be reflected at all levels of the community. Its effects must be felt at the political, economic, social, educational, community and other levels (see Illustration C).

Illustration C



Each community must also be connected to the nation as a whole. The nine Montagnais communities must come together at the cultural level, and be strengthened through a common culture which yet respects the cultural distinctiveness of each member.

### 5.2.3. Montagnais cultural autonomy: why and how?

#### 1. Montagnais cultural authority: decentralization to the communities

All of the communities consulted stressed the importance of a systematic decentralization of culture to the communities.

This decentralization must primarily take the form of recognition of the local cultural authority. In this way, the community is the basis for all policies, priorities or decisions pertaining to culture.

By virtue of the exclusive authority of the band councils over all fields within the jurisdiction of their respective communities, the local structures may take different forms and be assigned different powers, roles and responsibilities.

At present, most communities have opted for local operation by committee. Hence each of them has acquired a local cultural committee. The majority of these committees have a power of recommendation to their band council.

In the immediate future, as part of the vision of true cultural autonomy, these committees want recognition as the local authority for culture. Such a direction thus assumes an implicit political will by the band councils to recognize and delegate authority to these local committees. Depending on the community, these committees would become either local cultural councils, local cultural corporations, or cultural associations (see Illustration D).

#### Illustration D

<u>AT PRESENT</u>	<u>RECOGNITION</u>	<u>EVENTUALLY</u>
Local cultural committee (recommendation)	Yes	Local cultural council (decision making)
Regional cultural committee (recommendation)	Yes	Regional cultural council (delegated authority)
Local Council of Elders	Yes	Included in the structure
Council of Elders (ICEM)	Yes	Included in the structure

In the medium and long terms, the communities are in agreement on some kind of association at a higher level. Much reference is made to the current structures of the Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais (ICEM) and the Attikamek-Montagnais Council (CAM) when there is talk of planning for a longer-term vision.

For example, the regional cultural committee of ICEM, whose members represent each local cultural committee, would in turn become the cultural council of the Montagnais Nation, with certain powers defined and delegated by the communities (see Illustration E). The Council of Elders of each community would be attached to this "regional" structure. Particular emphasis is laid on the fact that the association would be more of a structure for discussion and dialogue, without any real decision-making power.

## Illustration E

## GLOBAL CULTURAL AUTONOMY PROJECT

MONTAGNAIS CULTURAL AUTHORITY  
(representative role)

Council of Elders (Nation)

REGIONAL CULTURAL COUNCIL  
(nine communities; delegated authority)

Council of Elders (local)

LOCAL CULTURAL COUNCILS  
(decision-making authority)

Furthermore, ICEM's structure will have to be substantially modified in light of the previous changes and in anticipation of a role that is based to a greater degree on representativeness to outside governmental authorities. ICEM's Council of Elders would be attached to this so-called "national" structure.

Finally, without being entirely specific, there is talk of another level attached primarily to the Montagnais aboriginal government (overall structure of the government). However, it is too early for our communities to provide further details regarding this level of authority.

## 2. Clarification of roles, mandates and responsibilities

Again, in light of the representative Montagnais organizations that are now in place, many participants also expressed their concerns with respect to the cultural roles and responsibilities of the higher-level bodies.

Apart from the local level, and to a certain degree the "regional" level, the top level will have to continue to consist of structures for exchange and dialogue. From this perspective, the exercise of real power is the priority of the community. The "regional" level functions on the basis of certain powers delegated by the grass roots. Finally, the "national" level remains essentially representative, with no real power over policies and decisions in cultural matters.

While they are in favour of the higher structures, the communities therefore have the extremely important task of identifying and clearly explaining the mandates, roles and responsibilities of each level.

### 3. Cultural policy and code of ethics

Self-government in cultural affairs also means that the communities must take charge of their cultural programs and services. This involves the establishment of our own policies and regulations in the field of culture. It also requires us to assume authority for the management of our own programs and services.

One of the important and necessary steps we must take is the development of our own cultural policy--a policy which is primarily produced by the communities and which will become the policy of the Montagnais Nation. As in the example of the cultural policy of Quebec, the Montagnais Nation must define itself as a distinct entity.

It is therefore necessary that we together define our general plan for assuming control of our cultural development through a "Cultural Policy of the Montagnais Nation".

Cultural empowerment also means adopting behaviour that is consistent with the discourse in our cultural policy. It means taking concrete action directed toward real cultural self-government. The Montagnais code of ethics then becomes the instrument that governs our actions and behaviour in this area. The code of ethics refers us to the values that characterize our nation in our everyday activities in the community, on the territory and in non-aboriginal environments.

### 4. The scope of Montagnais cultural authority

The scope of our cultural authority covers the entire concept of territory. We must affirm our cultural autonomy wherever we are called upon to take action.

Montagnais cultural authority should extend beyond mere management of programs and services. We must make use of this fundamental right to determine and enforce our own rules for governing our collective cultural future. In addition to applying a cultural policy and code of ethics within the frameworks of the community, the territory and the nation, we must be sure that we have a predominant place in the Quebec and Canadian arenas.

The government authorities of Quebec and Canada must therefore recognize our jurisdiction in the fields of activity that concern us. That they may do this, we must first of all recognize ourselves as a cultural authority and further affirm our autonomy.

## 5. Our cultural resources

Certain communities that are more remote from the urban areas indicate a lack of human resources in the field of culture and its development. For others, we already have all the human resources needed.

It should be clarified here that by lack of human resources we chiefly mean lack of persons qualified to manage and administer programs and services. The availability of all necessary human resources in other communities, on the other hand, means that our young people and elders are in a position to ensure the community's future in the cultural sphere.

As strange as it may seem, it is also true that there are few people in our communities who are "qualified" to effectively define, implement and manage the cultural autonomy of the nation. It is for this reason that in the very short term we must give attention to the training of our resources in light of this eventual Montagnais cultural autonomy.

## 6. Our cultural institutions

While the aspect of our cultural institutions was not examined in depth, the fact remains that all of the communities confirmed their desire to acquire their own cultural institutions.

Contrary to the study on cultural facilities that was done by ICEM in 1986, the communities prefer multidisciplinary institutions in which the functions of promotion, awareness, preservation, protection, social action and above all education would all be interrelated. These special forums will have this twin responsibility of cultural promotion and transmission of knowledge.

Many communities are particularly interested in traditional schools such as that of Uashat Mak Maniutenam (Sept-Iles, North Shore region). These schools, whose common denominator is the territory, would be designed to suit the cultural features of each community.

Finally, with reference to the geographical location of the communities and their characteristics, there is also talk of creating a genuine network of cultural institutions.

## 7. Recognition of Montagnais cultural authority

For the communities consulted, it is essential that recognition of Montagnais cultural authority derive from the communities themselves. The Montagnais communities will therefore have this responsibility for recognizing the Montagnais cultural authority.

However, the process for recognition of this authority is still to be clarified.

## 8. Montagnais cultural authority and aboriginal government

A culture unique to the Montagnais should lead us to a uniquely Montagnais governmental structure. This structure should reflect our nature, our roots, our values, our distinctiveness, our characteristics and our ambitions--in short, our traditional and present-day way of life.

For many, the members of Montagnais communities and representative aboriginal organizations (ICEM, Mamit Innuat, Mamuitun tribal council, etc) must be more fully involved in the process of negotiating the Montagnais comprehensive land claims. It was even mentioned that we must clarify and reinforce the cultural discourse of the aboriginal leaders. Culture must become the backdrop of a future aboriginal government.

## 9. Role of the federal and provincial governments

The first role of the governments would be to recognize the Montagnais Nation as sole master of its cultural destiny. Consequently, the transfer of all powers, programs and services relating to our culture is essential for real and full autonomy.

Second, our links with the governments will be further restricted to financial support.

Third and finally, the Montagnais communities are showing some openness toward the establishment of a true partnership between the Montagnais cultural authority and the governments in place.

### 5.2.4. Funding our culture

#### 1. General problem

The information collected indicates that there exists in our communities a general problem that is directly related to cultural funding. There are few programs--and where they exist, little funding--available for our satisfactory self-realization in the cultural sphere.

The cultural programs that are currently available, primarily from the Quebec Department of Culture, are difficult to access for community members and Montagnais organizations. On the one hand, by virtue of their established criteria, most of these programs do not correspond to the real needs of the communities, and on the other, the budget envelope available is so minimal that the funding to develop our projects is often higher than the total grant that follows.



## 2. Importance of local funding

Unlike most regular band council services such as education, economic development, health social services and so on, there is no core funding at the local level earmarked for culture and cultural development.

We thus find ourselves in a paradoxical situation in which all of the communities are advocating culture and the importance of protecting it, while no real financial support is being provided for that purpose.

As a result, the communities are emphasizing the urgency of identifying core funding from the local level to ensure the promotion and development of our culture. Every band council must therefore look into this issue and demonstrate openness toward this recommendation being made by the communities consulted.

## 3. The role of the higher authorities in the funding of culture

The federal and provincial governments will also have to review their funding formulas with respect to aboriginal peoples and culture. More substantial funding would encourage greater vitality at this level.

As for the representative aboriginal agencies, they must first be given a mandate to negotiate agreements with the governmental and other levels. The funding that flows from these agreements must then be distributed in the communities to meet local financial needs.

## 4. Toward new funding formulas

Finally, we must also demonstrate imagination and initiative in the cultural field. In addition to local and government funding, other funding formulas must be planned and implemented by our communities. Every community should identify these new formulas and apply them according to its needs.

### 5.3. EDUCATION

#### 5.3.1. Education: definition and understanding

##### 1. School: an aspect of life

When we asked what a real Montagnais school was, some people immediately responded that school must primarily be an aspect of life. School must therefore reflect the image of the community.

Therefore, education as we know it today in our communities must implement mechanisms that promote culture and allow our young people to live it to a greater extent in the schools.

It should be mentioned, however, that our present educational and school administrations already promote greater transparency of our culture in the schools. Among other things, we can point out the modification of the school calendar to include cultural weeks, participation of young people in traditional activities, increasingly evident use of the land as a locus for cultural transmission and learning, instruction of Montagnais, involvement of parents and elders in the academic environment, and adaptation of certain courses to make them focus more on culture and traditions.

However, there is the continuing problem of our principals being compelled to comply with the standards and curriculum of the Quebec Department of Education.

School must also be a forum for learning and cultural transmission. In this regard, it is clear for the education officials consulted that school cannot serve as a substitute for the role of the family. However, it is ready and able to play its role of cultural transmission, while respecting the overall educational structure for young people.

##### 2. Cultural identity: a problem in the schooling of young people

The current situation of our communities is creating for young Montagnais some real problems of cultural identity, and adversely affecting their sense of belonging to the nation.

Because our youngsters find themselves straddling two cultures, where on the one hand they are not in total possession of their native culture and on the other they are not totally accepted by the other culture, they come to experience certain socio-affective problems.

It must also be noted that all of the influences exerted upon young people by the present-day lifestyle and all of its elements gradually distance them from their true origins. And so they adopt new behaviour which substantially affects their relations with the community, the elders and their family.

Once again, the school, parents and family, as well as the young people themselves, must take more responsibility upon themselves and actively work to restore the cultural equilibrium.

### 3. Parental support and involvement in education

In addition to the efforts thus far made by the community, we must maximize the activity of the parents in education, and effectively ensure their involvement and support.

For many, education is not strictly limited to school instruction. Education is an ongoing cycle that starts at birth and stops only when the individual leaves this world.

We must therefore re-establish the involvement and support of the parents at all stages of this learning process (see Illustration F).

Illustration F

## COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Home Community	Elementary	Secondary	Postsecondary
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CULTURAL IDENTITY

PARENTS

#### 4. Need for a comprehensive collective project in education

With these ends in view, the communities have expressed a desire to work together on a comprehensive collective project in education for the Montagnais Nation.

This project must have its roots in the Montagnais communities and subsequently be articulated throughout the entire nation. It must be both common to all communities and respectful of local educational characteristics. The primary purpose of such a project is to ensure quality education for our young people, while promoting cultural training and enrichment. This comprehensive collective project in education must therefore be based on the strengthening of the Montagnais cultural identity and the development of the feeling of membership in the nation.

There is also much emphasis on the necessity of motivating our young people in their studies, without overlooking the importance of a cultural education.

#### 5.3.2. The place of traditional education and Montagnais culture in the current educational system

##### 1. The importance of culture in education

The integration of culture within the current educational system must be the responsibility of education. The school must therefore become a cultural institution.

As mentioned earlier, cultural transmission is first and foremost the responsibility of the parents and the family. However, the other development sectors of the community must also assume responsibility for culture, and ensure that it is an integral part of the orientation and application of services.

An authentic Montagnais school will be known by the very nature of its instruction and the services that will be provided there.

##### 2. Creation of a complementary system of traditional education

The idea was offered of possibly creating a complementary educational system that would provide conventional instruction as we know it today, while including a specialized Montagnais curriculum in cultural enrichment (see Illustration G).

This idea came forth following a certain finding made in a number of communities, to wit: for some parents, it is more important to ensure a quality education that will direct young people toward success in their studies and guaranteed employment, thus placing less emphasis on the cultural aspect, while for other parents, cultural enrichment and traditional education must assume an important place in the present educational system.

This complementary system of traditional education, however, would simply be a continuation of the basic educational system as regards the content and requirements of the Quebec curriculum. It would have the disadvantage of being just an option, requiring a school year that is distributed over a longer period.

#### Illustration G

### COMPLEMENTARY SYSTEM OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

QUEBEC CURRICULUM

MONTAGNAIS CURRICULUM  
(cultural enrichment option)

#### 3. Creation of a parallel system of traditional education

On the other hand, based on the great interest expressed by the communities in acquiring traditional schools, as has been the case in Uashat Mak Maniutenam (Sept-Iles) and more recently Mashteuiatsh (Pointe-Bleue), the idea was ventured of possibly creating two parallel educational systems.

Hence there would be a first educational system such as we know it today, but with certain improvements in the curriculum so as to bring it more in line with the cultural reality of the community, and a second system fully parallel to the first which would focus more on cultural enrichment based on the land and the learning of traditional crafts (see Illustration H).

Note, however, the full importance of explicit recognition of the knowledge and experience acquired in the parallel educational system.

## Illustration H

## PARALLEL SYSTEM OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

## CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

## TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Conventional schools

Traditional schools

Quebec curriculum and  
Montagnais curriculum

Instruction in traditional crafts

#### 4. Recognition of Montagnais as language of instruction in our schools

For many communities, it is essential that Montagnais be recognized as the official language of instruction in our communities.

At the very least, we should be in a position and have the authority to use and teach Montagnais in our local schools, equally with French or English.

#### 5. Integration and involvement of parents and elders in our schools

Regardless of the educational system advocated by the community, parents and elders must be systematically and implicitly integrated in our schools.

Since the family is the first agent of cultural transmission and the elders are the principal guardians of our culture, their position must be confirmed and incorporated in the comprehensive collective project in education, as in the local educational project.

## 6. The territory: a locus of learning and cultural enrichment in the service of education

As we saw earlier, the territory is a veritable locus of learning and cultural enrichment for our young people. While the Montagnais communities are already in agreement with this statement, there seems to be some difficulty in introducing a concept of education in which the land would play a greater role.

It is thus urgent for our communities, in defining this comprehensive collective project in education, to emphasize the territory and to identify the concrete formulas and mechanisms that can permit greater use of the land and its components in our education.

All of the communities have been made aware of the potential of the land, and have shown great openness in this connection.

### 5.3.3. Montagnais autonomy in education: why and how?

#### 1. Montagnais authority in education: decentralization to the communities

Like culture, education must first of all be under the control of the Montagnais communities. The local level thus is the authority for education. Real decision-making power lies at the grass roots.

It is therefore essential to ensure a genuine decentralization of education to the communities. This decentralization must initially take the form of recognition of the local educational authority. The community is thus the basis for all policies, priorities or decisions pertaining to education.

Because of the exclusive authority of the band councils over all areas for which their communities are responsible, the local structures may take different forms and, obviously, be entrusted with different powers, roles and responsibilities.

At present, most of the communities operate locally via committees. For example, some of them have parents' committees or education policy committees. On the whole, these committees have a power of recommendation to their band council. For now, this procedure seems to meet the needs of the communities in this area.

In the short term, with a view to real autonomy in education, there seems to be a political and administrative will to create new local structures that are more independent and more autonomous. For instance, in certain communities there is talk of creating a "local school board", while others seem to be opting for the establishment of a local school corporation.

Regardless of the form that the local structures will take, there is a unanimous opinion that these institutions will be initially directed, administered and managed by the parents, the educational personnel and the teaching staff.

Such an orientation assumes an implicit political will by the band councils to recognize and delegate their authority to these new structures.

In the medium and long terms, the communities are in agreement with the idea of creating an educational association of some sort at a higher level. However, this association will have to be limited to a role of discussion and dialogue, supported by an authority delegated by the Montagnais communities.

Once again, this "regional" structure will not have any real decision-making power, and could take the form of a Montagnais educational authority. Attached to this structure would be local councils of elders (see Illustration I). Hence this body would have a role and responsibilities that are based more on co-ordination, discussion and dialogue.

Finally, there is also talk of possibly creating a higher level that is affiliated mainly with the aboriginal government. This so-called "national" structure would take the form of a Montagnais governmental authority in education. Since it is essential for the communities to incorporate the elders within our structures, the nation's Council of Elders would be included in this higher structure (see Illustration I).

#### Illustration I

##### MONTAGNAIS GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY (approval of studies)

Council of Elders (Nation)

Councils of Elders (local)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)

##### MONTAGNAIS EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITY (delegated power)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)

Community (real power)



## 2. Clarification of mandates, roles and responsibilities

While we have not systematically covered the role and responsibilities of each level with respect to education, the people we consulted have said that the community is the authority and that real decision-making power will be exercised at the grass roots. The community will also be responsible for applying the standards and policies defined by the entire Montagnais Nation.

The role and responsibilities of the Nation's Montagnais educational authority will be exercised within the framework of the powers delegated to it by the communities. Its mandate will be one of co-ordination, discussion and dialogue. It will also play a representative role with the higher educational authorities.

Finally, the Montagnais governmental authority will have the role of ensuring compliance with the standards and policies defined by the Montagnais Nation, as well as the responsibility of granting approval to studies.

The Nation's Council of Elders and the local Councils of Elders will ensure compliance with the basic principles and Montagnais values that govern community development.

However, the roles and responsibilities of each level within the total structure still have to be clarified and further explained. This work must eventually be carried out.

## 3.\* Montagnais educational policy

Also mentioned is the importance of concrete self-definition in the field of education. To this end, the establishment of our own Montagnais educational policy is one of the key stages toward achieving self-government in educational matters.

However, this global policy at the nation level will have to refer directly to local policies on this subject. The policy must be comprehensive for the entire nation, but at the same time take into account and respect local characteristics in the field of education.

## 4. Scope of the Montagnais educational authority

The scope of our authority over education covers the entire concept of territory. We must affirm our autonomy in education wherever we are called upon to take action.

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\* This section is numbered "4" in the French original, and so forth through to the end of section 5.3.3. Consequently all numbers in this section from this point forward in the English have been reduced by one compared with the French original - Tr.

Montagnais authority for education should extend beyond mere management of programs and services. We must make use of this fundamental right to determine and apply our own rules for governing our collective educational future. Consequently we must even consider giving sanction to our own studies.

The government authorities of Quebec and Canada must therefore recognize our jurisdiction in the fields of activity that concern us. That they may do this, we must first of all recognize ourselves as an educational authority and further affirm our autonomy.

## 5. The Montagnais curriculum

The present Montagnais curriculum, which consists mainly of the instruction of Montagnais, certain subjects related to culture and tradition, and the adjustment of the school year so that traditional crafts may be practised and learned, is inadequate to ensure genuine education that is appropriate to the Montagnais people.

We must orient ourselves toward the development and recognition of a true Montagnais curriculum, in which the entire teaching program is imbued with our culture. The Montagnais school will then be an authentic one.

However, application of this curriculum must enable Montagnais students to perform as well as non-Natives, and to secure admission to higher education. The curriculum must therefore take into account the performance standards established at other government levels.

## 6. Training of our education resources

Many communities have raised the issue of the lack of human resources to ensure clear and total autonomy in education.

A real effort must therefore be made to steer our young people toward future jobs, not only in education but in all sectors related to aboriginal self-government. The training of our own resources is essential to our autonomy.

## 7. Our institutions of higher education: not a short-term need

In the very short term, it is not a priority for the communities to acquire their own institutions of higher education. Priority is rather given to the need for a satisfactory structure for our young people at the postsecondary level.

However, we must promote the establishment of a real partnership between the Montagnais governmental bodies and the existing institutions of higher education, both public and private.

#### 8. Recognition of Montagnais educational authority

Recognition of the Montagnais educational authority must take place at the community level, in particular by the parents.

The mechanisms to promote this recognition, however, are to be determined later.

#### 9. Montagnais educational authority and aboriginal government

As explained in point 4 of section 5.2.1 and shown in Illustration I, there will have to be a higher body within the Montagnais aboriginal government that will oversee application of and compliance with the policies and standards established by the Montagnais nation.

This higher body will also eventually exercise such authority in connection with the approval of studies.

#### 10. Role of the federal and provincial governments

The role played by the federal government will be limited mainly to financial support.

As for the provincial government, in addition to financial support, a need for technical support in education is emphasized. The province will also have to recognize our jurisdiction over education and our own educational system.

#### 5.3.4. Funding our education

##### 1. Geographic problems and the current funding formula

The more remote communities, such as Schefferville, have raised this issue as regards the current funding formula of the Department of Indian Affairs. As now applied, this funding formula puts certain communities at a disadvantage.

It must therefore be reviewed in conjunction with the Montagnais communities, so that a balance may be restored.

## 6. Legal and social framework of self-government in the fields of education and culture

Not being legal experts, it would be difficult for us to explicitly define the legal framework of the Montagnais Nation's accession to self-government in the fields of education and culture.

It is very interesting, however, to dwell for a moment on this question. Without claiming to define or even to fully grasp all of the legal aspects, we have nonetheless attempted to at least take stock of this issue, with the support of certain readings.

These readings have also obliged us to redefine this subject of the report by adding the social impact of eventual self-government in the fields of education and culture.

Without question, the most relevant document was the latest issue of the journal *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, 23, 1, Spring 1993. This special issue, entitled "Des alliances `fondatrices' au traités modernes", brings us up to date on aboriginal developments in the areas of land negotiations and claims. Most of the texts cited in this section of our study are taken from this journal.

First of all, in light of the information gathered and the reading we have done, we found that there are few documents or works dealing specifically with self-government in education and culture. The literature is more concerned with aboriginal self-government in a larger sense.

### 6.1. The unavoidable link between aboriginal self-government and the comprehensive land claims of aboriginal peoples

Whatever the case, we find that self-government in the fields of education and culture is directly related to the notion of "global" aboriginal self-government, which in turn is closely tied to the success of the comprehensive land claims of the aboriginal nations.

This link, or these specific links, are connected to this notion that aboriginal self-government cannot be genuine and concrete without a land base where self-government will eventually be applied and exercised by the aboriginal peoples. This is the situation for many aboriginal nations which are currently negotiating land claims with the governments.

This point of view is well expressed by Mr René Boudreault, an analyst, consultant and negotiator on certain aboriginal issues, in an article entitled "Réflexion sur une réalité moderne à `incarner': le traité préconfédératif de la nation huronne-wendat".\*

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\* All matter quoted from articles appearing in *Recherches amérindiennes* has been translated from original French - Tr.

The (negotiation) plan essentially depends on the logic of associating three issues presently under negotiation: the settlement of the (accepted) claim of the "40 arpents" territory, the negotiation undertaken under the federal community self-government policy (framework agreement signed), and the nation's treaty rights. From this perspective, the treaty will serve to render the nation's self-government meaningful and operational within the context of a new land base.

It is therefore difficult at this stage to anticipate any real exercise of self-government in education and culture, if this is generally indissociable from an imminent settlement of aboriginal land claims.

## 6.2. Cultural relations between Natives and non-Natives

We may note as well that diverging relations exist and persist between aboriginal nations and non-Natives, caused primarily by our differing cultures. Our respective understandings of the very notion of negotiation differ to such a degree that they are a serious threat to negotiation itself. Our concepts do not allow us to approach an eventual mutual comprehension. These divergences are major obstacles to any sound negotiation.

Mr Bernard Cleary, a consultant on aboriginal issues for the firm Bernard Cleary & Associés, presents his point of view in an article entitled "Le long et difficile portage d'une négociation territoriale" (*Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, Spring 1993), which is supported by his recent experience as a negotiator with the Attikamek-Montagnais Council and the Huron Nation Wendat Band:

I confess that I was completely bowled over, in the beginning, by this kind of statement, which was in total contradiction to my view of the qualities of a good negotiator and which demonstrated clearly to me that the gap between the aboriginal perception of the act of negotiation and that of the government representatives was enormous and almost unbridgeable.

The clear implication was that we did not even agree, at the outset, on the basic concept of a comprehensive land negotiation, that is, on the clarification of property title. How then could we sincerely correct this sort of situation, which has been perpetuated and aggravated for centuries? Yet this is the issue for future negotiations between the Natives and non-Natives of this country.

For certain idealistic researchers, no doubt filled with good intentions, the aboriginal people were convinced that they ought to be consulted from A to Z on absolutely everything of concern to them. The current result of this is that the consultations are interminable and often pointless, because certain persons cannot choose between subjects or concepts which they do not even understand.

In the land claims of the Dene and Métis of the Northwest Territories, these peoples have proposed not only a vision of their concept of self-government, but one that is deeply tied to their characteristic cultural values. This proposal is an apt illustration of the distinct character of the aboriginal nations, as opposed to non-Natives. Ms Shirleen Smith, who is in the doctoral program at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Alberta, presents a brief overview of this vision in an article published in *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, Spring 1993, which is entitled "De la volonté politique à la souveraineté autochtone, un bilan des négociations sur les revendications des Dènès et des Métis des Territoires du Nord-Ouest":

In 1981 the Dene and Métis developed a new project to ensure the implementation of their self-government. This project, entitled Public Government of the People of the North, proposed that a new province be created in the western part of the Northwest Territories, and indicated how the Dene culture and traditions could be expressed and protected by a new government with a mission to serve and represent all the citizens of the North.

We propose that a new jurisdiction, similar to a province, be created. It would have the name of Denendeh, a Dene word meaning "land of men". This jurisdiction would cover the territory that has been and continues to be the land of the Dene. Its borders would be set in a manner that would respect the legitimate claims of the other aboriginal peoples.

We are attempting to create an organization of political power that will embody Dene values, reflect the tradition and form of political organization of the Dene, and ensure fair and effective government not only for the Dene but also for the other Canadians living in the western part of the Northwest Territories. Without this, we will not be able to achieve an equitable settlement of our claims that truly respects our rights.

Today as in the past, the decisions we make comply with our own rules of conduct, ensure commitment and maximum participation from the people, respect the rights of individuals and of the community, and are reached by consensus. Our project is based on these traditions, to create a democratic, modern political organization that is adapted to the needs of the Dene and the other Canadians. (Dene Nation and Métis Association of the NWT 1981: 5).

### 6.3 The need to restore public opinion

The present situation of aboriginal land claims leads us to believe that, as Bernard Cleary indicates in the title of his article quoted above, the portage of land negotiation will indeed be long and difficult, and whether its result is positive or negative will depend on the openness to it of the people of Canada and Quebec.

Public opinion has deteriorated considerably over recent years. Native and non-Native politicians alike are sensitive to unfavourable public opinion. None of the parties involved dares to move too far ahead in so delicate a context.

On the other hand, comments have been made on the responsibility of the Canadian and Quebec governments to provide their populations with accurate information and real education on the matter of aboriginal negotiations.

To return to Mr Bernard Cleary (*Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, Spring 1993), communication is of primary and indeed essential importance in achieving the objectives of a negotiation process. This is how he presents his concerns in this regard:

It is important that Quebecers be fully aware that this is not a matter of taking something away from someone, but of allowing the aboriginal nations to develop according to their own societal choices, while preserving the obvious distinctiveness that is related, among other things, to their culture, their language and their way of life. It is also necessary for the governments, if they truly have in mind an equitable settlement for the groups with which they are negotiating, to ensure that the ground is conducive to the acceptance, by both Natives and non-Natives, of such a settlement, which will not fail to cause some major stirs in our societies.

Ms Shirleen Smith adds the following to this line of thought:

Think of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, or of the constitutional negotiations. It is still possible, if not necessary, to sensitize public opinion, which since the Oka crisis, the publicizing of the Lubicon's claims and the release of the report of the Justice Commission in Manitoba, is conscious all the same of the unacceptable situations still being experienced by a good many aboriginal people" (*Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, Spring 1993).

Finally, Mr René Boudreault presents this particular issue in these terms:

In the recent constitutional context, the prospect of a third order of government and inherent aboriginal rights might have given new scope to the Huron treaty by opening the way to the negotiation of self-government agreements with the aboriginal nations. The current situation is not conducive to a political will to move ahead with one part of the project (the Charlottetown Accord) which was rejected by Canada, Quebec and most of the aboriginal nations in November 1992.

Public opinion must therefore be a key factor in any negotiation, whether pertaining to land or anything else. If we do not have its support on both sides, the final resolution of any negotiation, however legitimate, will be considerably disrupted.

#### 6.4. The real will of governments to negotiate in good faith

Our readings lead us in the end to a profound and revealing question: do the governments have a real will to negotiate in good faith with the aboriginal nations?

This question is fundamental, because in a way it limits the possibility of one day seeing tangible evidence of real aboriginal self-government that is consistent with the values and cultural characteristics that distinguish us. How then can we reasonably envisage real self-government in education and culture by and for the Montagnais Nation?

To illustrate this situation, Mr Bernard Cleary, in his article quoted above, invites us to learn more about the governmental "strategies", writing as follows:

We must also know the workings of the two constitutional jurisdictions, Canadian and provincial. This is the cause of much difficulty, since Canada is responsible for "Indians" and "lands reserved for Indians", while Quebec as a province is responsible for lands, resources, and major administrative sectors of social life, such as education and health. Aboriginal people are often the ball in the ping-pong game between these two players.

To further document this question of ours and our related concerns, Ms Shirleen Smith and Ms Renée Dupuis--who has worked as a legal adviser for a number of aboriginal groups since 1972, including the Attikamek-Montagnais Council, and who also contributed to the latest issue of *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* (Spring 1993) with an article entitled "Historique de la négociation sur les revendications territoriales du Conseil des Atikamekw et des Montagnais (1978-1992)"--offer the following observations in the conclusions of their respective articles:

Its refusal to include and incorporate in land claims agreements both the peoples' property rights and their political and economic rights continues to pose a major obstacle to the conclusion of mutually satisfactory agreements. [Shirleen Smith, 1993]

We may conclude that the federal policy for settling aboriginal land claims through negotiation involves a very complex process, especially when conducted on a tripartite basis.

. . . Politically, the stakes for all of the parties are numerous and delicate, for each one has its own interests to protect, and even the two governments involved, which ultimately represent the same country, do not necessarily have the same designs . . .

. . . Until a satisfactory solution has been found to remove the impasse of the surrender of rights in exchange for compensation, we must expect progress to be extremely slow. [Renée Dupuis, 1993]



As you have seen, the attainment of real aboriginal self-government depends on the legal and social context in which are articulated all of the discussions which we hope will result in the material and imminent exercise of our rights within a governmental framework that is suitable to aboriginal people.

### **7. External factors which may influence or limit the process and extent of the self-government of the Montagnais Nation in the fields of education and culture**

One of the first external factors that may influence the process leading to the Montagnais Nation's attainment of self-government in education and culture is, as discussed in the section on the legal and social framework, that of the current comprehensive land claims being negotiated by the Attikamek-Montagnais Council.

Without going too far on this point, since it has already been covered, real and genuine autonomy in education and culture depends largely on the results of this negotiation. As we mentioned in the analysis report, the total territory (community plus ancestral land) is extremely important in terms of a suitable and logical continuity in the educational and cultural fields.

The application and exercise of autonomy in education and culture must extend beyond the physical concept of the community.

Quebec's recent cultural policy is another factor which impels us to define ourselves as individuals and as a nation. This policy leaves little room for aboriginal people, and that little room does not afford Natives real mechanisms for their cultural and social self-realization.

It is in this sense that the findings of the analysis are pertinent. Like many other aboriginal peoples, the Montagnais must define themselves as a nation by developing their own cultural policy.

In this regard, the framework (and not the content) of Quebec's cultural policy remains something to be exploited by the Montagnais Nation.

As we have also seen, public opinion is a key factor in the attainment of aboriginal self-government. The events of recent years, such as the Oka crisis, are not leading us toward cultural reconciliation. On the contrary, almost everything has to be rebuilt, and even redefined to some degree. The Montagnais communities, the organizations representing them, and the levels of government must assume greater responsibility on this issue, and propose measures that will make it possible to reopen the debate in a healthy atmosphere that is marked by mutual respect.

The "cross-cultural power struggles" resulting from the particular concepts associated with the different cultures are another problem that has to be resolved, or at least toned down, so that the respective discourses of the parties at the negotiating table may be made understandable and acceptable.

Other important factors relating to self-government are the areas of jurisdiction of the federal government and Quebec, such as lands, education, culture and so on, and the overlaps in management of certain programs and services for aboriginal people. We have to first of all understand the relations between the two levels of government, and then grasp the scope of the programs and services designed for us.

Finally, the recent failure of the Charlottetown Accord, which has meant a refusal by both Natives and non-Natives to see an imminent realization of a blueprint for aboriginal society, remains in itself a telling indication of the work and the effort that must eventually be devoted to rebuilding the bridges between the cultures.

## **8. Approval of the study's findings**

The process of approving the findings of this study was agreed with all of the Montagnais communities, as follows:

- Approval of the consultation report by each community (to be finalized);
  - Approval of the analysis report by each community (included in the following stage);
  - Approval of the first review by each Montagnais community (to follow);
  - Approval of the final report (August 1993).

The communities insisted that this approval process be respected, so that the final report might adequately reflect the vision of self-government of the Montagnais Nation in the fields of education and culture.

Unfortunately, with the exception of Mashteuiatsh, no community took action on the approval process.

## 9. Comments and recommendations

### 9.1. Comments

The production of this study will at least have made it possible to understand and grasp the complexity of the aboriginal issue in its entirety, and not only in the fields of education and culture.

The findings of this study will allow the Montagnais Nation to move beyond the framework of this report and to promote discussion and exchange.

One of those findings indicates that the Montagnais Nation wants its self-government, but does not yet have a full grasp of the issue within the current context of comprehensive land claims. The representative Montagnais organizations therefore have some major work to do in terms of informing and educating the communities. Efforts will thus have to be made to get closer to the grass roots, and so make possible greater understanding of the issue.

### 9.2. Recommendations

- This initial project must lead us toward a clearer definition of the concept of self-government for the Montagnais Nation in the fields of education and culture;
- This initial project has definitely created specific expectations in the Montagnais communities, which want to see concrete follow-up, from both the Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais (ICEM) and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples;
  - The implementation of certain basic principles and orientations discussed in this report is considered realistic and feasible in the short term for a good many of the participating communities;
- We must continue our consultation work among expanded target clienteles, so that the findings of this study may be accurate and representative;
- In order that specialists in education and culture may be truly involved in negotiations, they must have a predominant place in work relating to the comprehensive land claim of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council (CAM);
- Final approval of the findings of this study cannot be confirmed until each participating community has given its approval;
- Information and awareness strategies for the aboriginal communities and non-aboriginal populations should be planned, developed and implemented;

- Mechanisms to ensure the involvement of the Montagnais communities in the issue of aboriginal self-government should be created and implemented;
- A network for the exchange and sharing of information relating to aboriginal self-government and the comprehensive land claims of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council should be established;
- The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples should provide an account to the Montagnais communities and representative Montagnais organizations of the results of its work and the recommendations that **it intends\*** to table before the Government of Canada.

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\* It is imperative that the Montagnais communities and the directors of the Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais receive the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples before they are tabled before the Government of Canada.

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