
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 ACCORD GOALS

The Accord and related 1990 legislation aimed at achieving four goals:

- *An end to litigation* – halting an expensive 20 year battle over oil and gas revenues from the Metis Settlement Areas,
- *A secure Metis land base* – protected lands that would provide a base for future generations of Metis;
- *Effective self-governance* – a culturally appropriate system of self-governance, with local and central components, developed in cooperation with the Province; and
- *Economic self-sufficiency* – the capacity, including infrastructure and services, to achieve economic well-being and self-reliance on par with other communities in Alberta.

The work of the TAP process to date shows that Alberta and the Settlements have moved a long way towards these goals. While some are close to fulfillment, others, despite the progress, will not be reached without a clear eyed, concentrated and cooperative effort.

8.2 PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

A SECURE LAND BASE

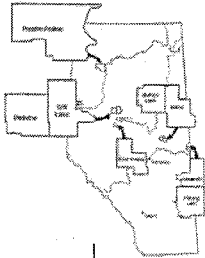
Metis lands are now more secure than they were. The fee simple interest in all lands is held by General Council and protected from alienation by both the *Metis Settlements Land Protection Act* and the *Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act*.

There is work remaining in the area of lands, especially in the area of land allocation and in unlocking the land base as a source of economic development. And, of course, the Metis Settlement lands are not entrenched in the Canadian Constitution as originally intended.

SELF GOVERNANCE

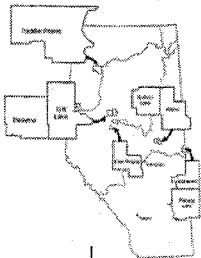
Since the Accord, the Metis Settlements have developed an array of unique governance forms. The cost of this governance structure, with the Settlement Councils and General Council as the key elements, is high.

The members participating in the focus groups did not express the level of



8.3 CONCLUSION

The first 15 years of the Accord have produced Metis Settlement communities still rooted in Métis culture but with the capacity to begin participating successfully in the larger Alberta economy. This is a remarkable achievement. The work is not done, however, and if the effort is simply abandoned in 2007 the most likely result is that the Settlements will slip back. Working together, the government and the Métis have developed a work plan to tackle the issues that stand in the way of continued progress in the post-2007 era. This work plan for Stage 2 of the TAP Project calls for a joint effort, jointly funded, to develop and implement a plan to address the shortfall areas—efficient governance, sustainable housing, closing the cost/revenue gap, and so on. All that is needed now is for both parties to commit to carrying out this effort.



This sets out three goals, framed in terms of the aspirations of the Metis Settlements to

- secure a land base for future generations,
- gain local autonomy in their own affairs, and
- achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The preamble of the *Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act, 1990* states similar goals of a land base and self-governance, but speaks also to the enhancement of the culture and identity in the following words:

... it is desired that the Metis should continue to have a land base to provide for the preservation and enhancement of Metis culture and identity and to enable the Metis to attain self-governance under the laws of Alberta ...

A fourth Accord goal, less clearly stated in the source documents, was to enable the Settlements to—in the language of the time—“catch up and keep up” with their neighbours. This represented a mutual goal to establish infrastructure and services on the Settlements similar to those in neighbouring communities. This goal is never specifically stated, although it may be implied in phrases like “achieve economic self-sufficiency”. In support of this view are comments made by the responsible Minister, the Hon. Ken Rostad when moving second reading on Bill 33, the *Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act*—the Bill dealing with Accord funding. After describing lengthy discussions with the Metis on the new framework, he said it had been determined that

... to give the Settlements the opportunity to obtain a level of self-sufficiency comparable to other municipalities in Alberta and to successfully undertake responsibilities of a local government, we would need to provide the Settlements with a financial assistance package that would effectively address their needs through the transition phase of the implementation of this legislation and the accord and the time when they are self-sufficient and the government involvement ceases, a period now proposed of 17 years.

The proposed financial assistance package consisted of \$310 million spread over 17 years. In response, an opposition member asked

Is the \$310 million over the 17 years sufficient to build the infrastructure that's going to be adequate for economic development and self-sufficiency?¹⁰

The member suggested that perhaps the amount should be indexed for inflation. Another opposition member questioned whether the financial commitments were adequate to enabling self-sufficiency in 17 years given the fact that “the standard of living on these particular Settlements is

¹⁰ Hawkesworth, Hansard 90.06.05-1666

