

Presentation To
the
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
by the
Metis Women of Manitoba Inc.

The Metis Women of Manitoba is NOT appearing before the Commission simply because the Commission wishes to hear from us. We are here representing a united, growing force in Manitoba ... not to beg; not to whine and complain; ... but to present the Commission with hard, cold FACTS concerning the situation of the Metis Women of Manitoba.

Quite frankly, the evidence we are presenting to the Commission shows the condition of Metis Women to be far better than it actually is. Our reason for adopting this approach is simple. We deliberately chose to err on the side of understanding our case as opposed to making statements that, while they be true, would not be seen as credible since they do not appear in the data banks of Canada's official record keepers.

With the exception of some evidence on matters related to vital statistics and some supporting evidence on matters related to the Northern Manitoba economy, every shred of evidence we are presenting is directly extracted from Statistics Canada sources. With only minor exceptions, and these are noted for the Commission and your staff, the data used to prepare this submission is drawn from the 1986 census. While our choice would have been to use the 1991 census, some of the important socio-economic data from 1991 was not available at the time we began our research. Therefore, we used Statistics Canada's 1986 data base almost exclusively, to maintain consistency, avoid confusing explanations respecting cross-references and to enable Commission staff to check our data with the greatest of ease.

In this respect the Metis Women of Manitoba are all too familiar with the role played by the staff of any government body, whether it is an ongoing part of the bureaucracy or a less permanent body such as this Commission. Whether anyone cares to admit it or not, there are conflicting agendas and loyalties. And these conflicting agendas and loyalties are not confined to the staff of the Commission. They extend to the government appointed Commissioners, including both Co-Chairmen, as well as every party making a presentation to the Commission.

In recognition of this reality, the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc. request the Commissioners to direct Commission staff, and to make note of it for your own conduct, to scrutinize all the evidence we are submitting. Scrutinize it very carefully and thoroughly. Do your own checking and cross-checking. List all the big and little mistakes or errors in calculation or disputes regarding methodology. Having done all the foregoing, we ask you to contact us immediately before rejecting all, or any part of this submission or concluding, for whatever reason, that it is off-base in any respect.

We have all the confidence in the world as to the validity of the arguments we are making and wish to make it clear we did not go to all this work simply to have someone play games with the information we are presenting to you.

OUR THEME

The evidence we place before you shows clearly that the Metis in Manitoba have endured a long period of suffering as a consequence of national policy which clearly embarked on a course of annihilating us almost 125 years ago. It did not work and we are not here to moan about the past. We are not even here in an attempt to seek redress for historical blunders. The majority of Canadians have reason to seek redress for historical blunders which, it seems, is simply another way of describing the outcome of every election.

We are here to show that the things most leaders in Manitoba and Canada complain about the longest and loudest, are not the real problems of this province or this country at all.

They are, rather, the symptoms of a more deeply rooted problem, like the mad aunt locked up, bound and gagged in the attic that no one wants to talk about because dealing with it requires a departure from the current way of doing things.

The Metis Women of Manitoba intend to illustrate some, not all, but some of the symptoms of this problem. Normally society's leaders, primarily, but not entirely, non-Metis males, gaze across the horizon, spot something wrong and immediately identify it as THE problem. Therefore, we have THE housing problem or THE substance abuse problem or THE education problem or THE wife and child battering problem or THE health problem or THE unemployment problem or THE Aboriginal crime problem or THE public debt problem.

Not one of the foregoing is THE problem. In fact, placed in the proper context, they serve a useful purpose in revealing something about our society which, upon examination, illustrates the inter-linkages between all these things which our leaders seem to think of as isolated problems, but which are really symptoms of underdevelopment in certain sectors accompanied by overdevelopment in other parts of society.

Underdevelopment can be defined in many ways but it is normally associated with exploitation. It is not uncommon to find pockets of poverty in the midst of lavish wealth. In fact, it is normal mainly because wealth is acquired, in part at least, by impoverishing people who lack the power to defend themselves against measures taken that have the effect of enriching a few while impoverishing many. The result is overdevelopment piled on top of underdevelopment. In some cases, it is convenient to put many poor people in one community, virtually isolated from the rest of society. That way, they are out of sight and out of mind. In other cases, such as in our larger urban centres, the poor are born, live and struggle and die in the shadows of the symbols of power and privilege.

To have any impact at all, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples absolutely must result in driving home a single message to all Canadians. The message has numerous elements but the central theme is clear.

ALL CANADIAN PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN A FOOL'S WORLD AS LONG AS THEY CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE MACHINERY OF PUBLIC POLICY TO REST IN THE HANDS OF THOSE REPRESENTING POWER AND PRIVILEGE.

A vital element of this theme is that race is used as a means of exploitation. Included in this element is the eagerness with which some representatives of a minority race, including Aboriginal people, ease their way into positions of privilege by cozying up to power.

A second vital element in this theme is that gender is used as a means of exploitation. This includes women who eagerly adopt male values to secure positions of power and privilege for themselves.

A third vital element is that it is impossible to sustain, for any appreciable period of time, a healthy society; a secure society; a safe society, where numerous pockets of people live in relative comfort and security alongside numerous pockets of people living in misery. One does not have to travel to Somalia or Bosnia to understand this elementary lesson. It is not even necessary to go to Los Angeles or New York. Pay attention to events in places like Winnipeg. And anyone who believes the answer is an ever-expanding police force or a special judicial system for Aboriginal people is the way to deal with the problem, just is not thinking beyond the conditioning we have been submerged in for generations; the conditioning based on the European-American male dominated power game.

Finally, a fourth vital element is the harsh truth that the large public debt, at the provincial and federal levels, has been incurred for purposes of conveying additional power and privilege on those already bloated with more than their share, and will not be paid off on the backs of the Metis; and certainly not on the backs of Metis women.

OUR INTENT

The evidence we are presenting demonstrates that all Metis, Metis women in particular, despite our subjugation, have emerged as a strong and vibrant force that simply will not be held back.

While the majority of Metis women still live in poverty; while the majority of Metis women continue to survive on the lower rung of our socio-economic ladder, we have developed a particular strength of consciousness and determination.

The institutions of Manitoba and Canada would do well to accept this as a fact of life, early rather than later.

While we are Metis and while we are women, it is not our intent to build a wall between ourselves and other women in Manitoba or elsewhere. Neither is it our intention to build a wall between ourselves and enlightened males in Manitoba or anywhere else.

Despite the fact we intend to rise above our current circumstances however, no amount of temptation will succeed in locking us into accepting pervasive Euro-American social order which relies on racial and gender differences to acquire power for a few.

It is our intent to lead, as we were leaders over a century before, and to entreat others to join us in leading the way to real, positive development in Manitoba and beyond.

In the process of gathering material for this submission, which began as an innocent exercise to examine our own circumstances as Metis women, we came across the dark underside of Canadian society. Certainly Metis women are at the bottom of the socio-economic order. We share this position with large numbers of women of First Nations who are captives of little elite male groups in their own communities. We share this position with large numbers of immigrant women who moved to Canada to find, here, what they sought to escape. We share this position with large numbers of women of European origin, most of whom are largely ignorant of their own circumstances or are unable to break the shackles of male dominance in their own lives. We share this position with the vast majority of Metis and other Aboriginal men who are looking to everyone but Metis women for solutions to their difficulties. Finally, we share this position with large numbers of lily-white men who, underneath it all, are frightened stiff, yet seem compelled by their own rearing to adopt an air of bravado, of machoism, of ongoing male dominance that in the end will make their current nightmares seem like a pleasant dream.

All these people are to be found, not only in the Metis communities of central and northern Manitoba. They exist in the urban north as well as rural and remote northern communities. They are also to be found in large numbers in cities like Winnipeg, Brandon and Portage la Prairie. It does not stop there. Contrary to popular opinion, there is nothing magical about the Trans-Canada Highway. There are pockets of poverty and misery and underdevelopment in every single census sub-division all over the old buffalo hunting grounds of the Metis throughout the so-called rich farming areas of southern Manitoba.

And without question one will find exactly the same circumstances in every community in Canada.

In keeping with our heritage, the proud heritage of the Metis, the Metis Women of Manitoba intends to reach out and, wherever possible, have others join us in an ongoing, sustained effort of leading the way to real development.

To make matters abundantly clear, however, it is essential for the Commission and everyone else to understand one basic fact.

While we intend to reach out and join with others and build a better future, under no circumstances will the Metis Women of Manitoba lose its identity. As Metis women, we have struggled long and hard with little or no resources or assistance from any other body. Nothing will cause us to ever give up our identity from this point on. Nothing will cause us to turn our backs on the lessons we have learned. Nothing will cause us to ignore our own heritage.

From this point on, we are a force that will take a back seat to no one.

THE PRIMARY DATA SOURCE

1. The primary data source used to prepare the background information for the submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is Statistics Canada (Stats Can). Other sources are used only in cases where Stats Can information is not available. Wherever this may occur in the submission, the source will be noted.

2. While Statistics Canada's latest available data base is 1986, and while the data does not accurately reflect certain vital issues Metis women must contend with in Manitoba, it is used primarily because no one will ever be able to accuse the Metis Women of Manitoba of using flawed evidence to present our case. The evidence may well be flawed, but certainly not in favour of Metis women.
3. Statistics Canada divides the province into 23 divisions which, in turn, are sub-divided into a total of nearly 300 sub-divisions. Sub-divisions, in general terms, approximate the boundaries of municipalities, towns, local government districts and Indian Reserves with the exception of large metropolitan areas such as the city of Winnipeg, which is designated as a census division, and sparsely populated unorganized areas.
4. A large part of this submission contains calculations of data extracted from the 1986 census which the Commissioners and their staff can use to verify statements made, and conclusions arrived at, by the Metis Women of Manitoba.
5. Calculations derived from Stats Can sources are structured as follows:
 - 5.1. The subject is identified by name and a "schedule suffix" (such as A, D, etc.) on the front page or, in some cases, pages, which summarizes the analysis.
 - 5.2. The subject matter of each table, which contains the raw data supporting the contents of each schedule, is compared to the estimated Metis percentage of the population wherever it is possible to do so without distortions.
 - 5.3. Each table contains raw data on the subject matter as it pertains to each census divisions and sub-divisions in Manitoba.

NOTES ON POPULATION METHODOLOGY

Schedule A

A major constraint in conducting the research required to prepare a credible submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is the lack of an authoritative, comprehensive database on Metis people in Manitoba.

Statistics Canada and the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics are normally charged with this obligation. For the purposes required here, the Manitoba Statistics Bureau may as well not exist. Therefore, it was decided to use Stats Can since, despite the shortcomings in terms of data on the Metis (elaborated on more fully in the Notes to Schedule B), a single data base for the majority of the research work provides the most reliable information.

The Major flaws with Stats Can are:

1. The Metis are not identified separately at the division and sub-division levels. Instead they have an internal method for estimating the Metis population at the provincial and federal levels.

2. Due, in part at least, to the 20% sampling method and the scattered Metis population, it is certain that numerous Metis are not identified.
3. Stats Can, as with most well-entrenched institutions, tends to believe itself, and it is seen as credible with most other bodies, while ignoring the "wisdom of people at the local scene". To the extent governments and other institutions rely on Stats Can information, this may explain, in part at least, why they behave so strangely when dealing with the Metis.

The research 'imputes' Stats Can's data using the following method:

- The total number of people categorized as "Aboriginal" at the provincial, division and sub-division levels were calculated.
- Aboriginal people categorized within "Indian Reserves" [R] and "Indian settlements" [S E] were deducted from the "Aboriginal" category.
- The remainder are defined in a category shown as "Metis and Off-Reserve".
- Each area of research tabulated contains the percentage of "Metis and Off-Reserve" people within each census division and sub-division.

While the aforementioned does not provide accurate information, it more accurately reflects the approximate circumstances of the Metis in Manitoba within the communities they live than generalizations extrapolated from data at the provincial and federal levels.

The 1986 census data base was used throughout the study since the only data was on population from the 1991 census at the time this work was under way.

The Schedule A tables (Table I) illustrates how the percentages used in the "Metis and Off-Reserve" category are derived.

Each table is identified in precisely the same manner by census division and sub-division numbers and geographic location to facilitate cross-referencing of information.

Where required, an explanation will be given as to precisely what a particular table means, e.g., an "economic family".

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commissioners issue instructions to staff of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to diligently scrutinize the data, as well as interpret the methodology and, should there be a dispute or should errors emerge, to **immediately** inform the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc. to arrive at a means of resolving errors or misinterpretations. It is not the intent of the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc. to add to the over-abundance of flawed logic currently floating around.

NOTES ON POPULATION

Schedule B

1. A glance through the tables clearly demonstrates no one has a firm grasp on the number of Metis in Manitoba.
2. The Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. (MMF) had 14,500 members in 1990, the latest available date for membership lists. Each membership is an individual membership. To be a member a person must be 18 years of age or older. Membership is entirely voluntary and there are no special rewards for being or becoming a member. In most cases it simply adds to a person's workload, obligations and headaches.
3. The MMF divides the province into 7 regions which, in turn, have a total of 123 locals.
4. It is reasonable to assume that many families are represented by only one member, that is, by either one or another of the spouses. To err on the side of caution, one could make the following assumptions as a basis for calculating who MMF members represent:
 - 4.1 75% of families may be represented by 2 memberships.
 - 4.2 25% of families may be represented by one membership.
 - 4.3 Each family is comprised of four people.
 - 4.4 Every Metis family member in the province is represented by a membership as in 4.1 or 4.2.

Based on this very conservative set of assumptions, the voluntary membership of the MMF would, therefore, directly represent 36,240 Metis people in Manitoba.

5. To emphasize the low number of Metis shown in Stats Can reports, one only has to look at census division #2, where there is a significant Aboriginal population. Yet, there is not a single MMF local in the entire division. Similarly, there are numerous census sub-divisions throughout the province with an Aboriginal population base large enough to justify a Metis local, yet no local is established. The natural question to ask is, why is there no MMF local in these places? The simplistic answer may well be that the MMF has little or nothing to offer Metis people. If such is the case, one must ask why the MMF has little or nothing to offer.

Pursuing this line of reasoning, it must be recognized that the Metis have exactly the same Constitutional rights as First Nations. First Nations however, have no problem counting their numbers for several reasons including, in most cases, a land base with boundaries and a central registry maintained, unfortunately, by the Department of Indian Affairs. In addition First Nations have core funding guaranteed at the Reserve level, plus other funds, inadequate though they may be, to provide for education, health and other programs as well as funding significantly higher than the Metis, for provincial and federal organizations.

IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE COMMISSION TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS POINT WILL ARISE THROUGHOUT THE SUBMISSION, NOT BECAUSE THE METIS WOMEN OF MANITOBA INC. FEEL FIRST NATIONS ARE OVER FUNDED, BUT BECAUSE THE METIS FULLY UNDERSTAND THE TACTICS GOVERNMENTS EMPLOY IN THEIR EFFORTS TO HAVE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE FIGHT AGAINST ONE ANOTHER RATHER THAN DEAL WITH THE ESSENTIAL ISSUES BEFORE US. IT WILL NOT WORK.

6. The 1986 census shows Manitoba's total Aboriginal population as 55,410 people, broken down as follows:

North American Indian	40,960
Metis	14,270
Inuit	185

7. Clearly the number of Metis is far below the real numbers. One simple explanation is Statistics Canada's own well-known position respecting the difficulty of arriving at accurate figures when using a 20% sample where a relatively small segment of the population is widely interspersed with large numbers of other peoples. Another factor may be that some simply are unaware of their Metis origins. Another could be the temptation to deny one's heritage in a society so infused with racism.
8. To compensate, on an interim basis, for the unbelievably low number of Metis calculated by Statistics Canada, the Metis Women of Manitoba have simply defined all people identified as Aboriginal, not residing on Reserves, in a category shown in the tables as "Metis and Off-Reserve". The total number used throughout this analysis is 28,210 which is 1.54% of Manitoba's total population.
9. In the event that anyone should consider this an inflated number, it should be recalled that the 1870 census of the Red River and Grantown settlements alone, without considering any of the numerous Metis communities throughout Manitoba or elsewhere in the west, reveals the composition of the population in those two communities (combined) at that time as follows¹:

Indians	560
Whites	1,600
Metis	9,800

To project what this means, as conservatively as possible, we can apply the Canadian average rate of natural population growth (live births minus deaths) over the period from 1870 to the present. Using only Red River and Grantown Metis population as a starting point, there would be 112,700 Metis in Manitoba today. This is nearly double the 59,745 Metis the 1986 census says existed in all of Canada in 1986.

Certainly large numbers of Metis migrated out of Manitoba following 1870 and 1885. But there were large numbers of Metis, at the time, who were well established in what was later to be

¹Pelletier, Emile; "A Social History of the Manitoba Metis", MMF Press, 1977, pp 16 & 17.

known as Saskatchewan and Alberta, as well as British Columbia, the Yukon and the North West Territories. There was a very high Metis population throughout most of Ontario and parts of the Maritimes in 1870, and in Quebec the Metis no longer even identify themselves as Metis in most cases, but simply as "old Quebecois" to differentiate themselves from the French and Anglo "newcomers". Additionally, large numbers of Metis migrated to Manitoba from other parts of Canada and there continued to be numerous marriages of both whites and Metis to Indian people in Manitoba, as elsewhere, resulting in the births of more Metis children. The Metis have been damned and praised for many things but never, by anyone with even a nodding acquaintance of the subject, for raising small families.

This still leaves a burning question unanswered: where have all the Metis gone and where are they now?

RECOMMENDATION: That the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples assist the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc., to negotiate an arrangement with Statistics Canada and the Manitoba Statistics Bureau aimed at developing a method to determine, with far more precision than at present, the number of Metis people residing in the Province of Manitoba and their socio-economic circumstances.

NOTES ON GENERAL EDUCATION

Schedule C

The tables used in schedule C are divided into two parts for each census division and sub-division.

The first part of the tables extracts the actual educational levels directly from the 1986 census database.

The second part, the lower portion of the page for each census division, is used to impute the numbers of Metis and Off-Reserve people with their minimum levels of education by census division and sub-division. The concept of minimum levels of education for Metis and off-Reserve people rests on the shaky assumption that there is equality of educational opportunities for all Manitobans and all Canadians. Everyone knows there is definitely NOT any semblance of equality, or equal access for education, for the all.

Nonetheless, if we overlook the barriers to education faced by Manitoba Metis women and accept the assumption of equity, the census data shows the following provincial totals for the Metis women in Manitoba:

Total Metis Population 15 years and over (women)*	Less Than grade 9	Grade 9 to 13 with secondary certificate	Trades Certificate or Diploma	Other non-University Education with a Diploma	University with a Degree
11,305	2,182	952	264	1,454	985

*Based on women comprising 51% of the population.

When one examines the data more closely, the following becomes apparent:

1. The highest concentration of Metis women with higher levels of education and training are concentrated in urban centres with Winnipeg, which has only 2.16% of its population comprised of Metis, absorbing 11.46% of those holding university degrees, while census districts 19 to 23, where the Metis population ranges from 5% to 27% of the population, enjoys the contribution of only 3% to 7% of graduates. Other urban centres, particularly Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, The Pas, and Thompson benefit unduly from more highly educated Metis women.
2. The raw data does not take into consideration obstacles Metis women must overcome to remain in school at all, let alone advance beyond matriculation. Matters such as racism, cultural differences, gender discrimination, poverty and lack of assured funding for higher education and training, as was available to Treaty Indian women, are unaccounted for. Nor does the raw data shed any light on the relatively easy alternatives for male Metis to acquire skills as opposed to Metis women. The best example is in trades where it is traditionally been far easier for men to acquire certified skills via apprenticeships in fields closed to women.
3. The raw data is based on 1986 information. This is vital since, to have any impact on 1986 data, Metis women would have had to seize the initiative years earlier in order to advance their education to even be visible by 1986.
4. Given the fact Metis women in Manitoba are recognized at all for their achievements in education in 1986 coupled with the large numbers of Metis women known for the advanced positions they hold throughout the province, the raw data almost certainly understates the real educational achievements of Metis women.
5. In the eight years since the census data was compiled, Metis women in Manitoba have increased their education achievements exponentially. However, in terms of credibility as well for purposes of planning, a method of developing and maintaining a register of the educational status of every Metis women in the province is critical.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Schedule D

WOMEN COMPARED TO MEN BY EDUCATION CATEGORY

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the fields of post-secondary education engaged in, and the results, by Metis women as compared to Metis men, non-Metis women and non-Metis men, with the exception of Indian people living on Reserves who are not included because reliable information is not available for Indian people living on Reserves in the 1986 census in Manitoba. It is assumed that, due to Treaty rights respecting education, the overall levels of post-secondary and university education of Indians who reside on Reserves is at least equal to that of the Metis.

The same basic assumptions apply to this schedule as to Schedule C despite the fact that doing so understates the determination and achievements of Metis women. The reason, once again, is to maintain strict standards of measurement for purposes of credibility.

The layout of the tables is the same as in Schedule C except that, due to the amount of detail, it was necessary to set up two tables: one for men and the other for women. Therefore, the data compares Metis men to the general male population, Metis women to the general female population and Metis men to Metis women.

The differences in numbers of people within each category can NOT be compared to Schedule C. In general, post-secondary education does not include university degrees which are the subject of Schedule C.

Due to the small numbers of Metis, both men and women, in many census sub-divisions, a choice had to be made as to whether numbers should be 'rounded' or contain percentages. While it may seem odd to attempt to divide a single person into a percentage, this method was used at the sub-division level as a method of illustrating the need for more precision than Stats Can, or any other agency, has been able to provide as far as meeting the requirements of the Metis are concerned. This method makes no difference in the overall analysis however, since the numbers are rounded at the division level.

While some will argue that the methodology used to determine post-secondary education achievements of the Metis results in over-stating the achievements of Metis men and women the following should be taken into consideration:

1. Through most of the 1970's and 1980's all Aboriginal people in Manitoba were the targets of special post-secondary educational initiatives.
2. The Metis aggressively pursued every learning option available to them since all are fully aware that, historically, most educational avenues were 'off-limits' to the Metis due to a combination of factors including:
 - 2.1 An educational policy designed to confer the advantages of higher education on the sons and daughters of those with existing advantages.
 - 2.2 Neglecting the quality of schooling at the elementary and high school levels in areas where the Metis population was the highest, that is, in the northern and certain rural areas in the mid and southern parts of the province.
 - 2.3 The overt racist and sexist orientation of the educational system that is now acknowledged as a blotch on Manitoba and Canada's history.
 - 2.4 The certainty with which the learned men of the educational establishment measured and equated 'intelligence' based on familiarity with, and blind acceptance of, male European/U.S. values and knowledge. (See attached Alternative I.Q. test).

3. The Metis people of Manitoba are super-conscious of the leap forward taken by the Metis once the opportunity became available.
4. While the methodology used to assess Metis educational achievements is not precise, it is weighted in a manner to understate the actual levels, particularly in the case of Metis women. For example, while Stats Can says 52% of the population is female, the calculations used here are based on 50% female.

More important is the fact that educational data is based on Stats Can's findings that 1.54% of Manitoba's population is Metis and Off-Reserve while the Metis know that this understates the real Metis population by over 1000%. Furthermore, Stats Can confesses as much in another normally overlooked table, 2.18 page 2-28 of the 1990 Canada Year Book, which clearly shows the Metis population of Canada as numbering 676,910 as opposed to 59,745. (Photocopy attached).

For Manitoba, therefore, this means the educational achievements of the Metis would be more accurately portrayed by using a Metis population base of closer to 100,000 or 10% of the total.

At some point, Canada will learn that the Metis cannot be arbitrarily defined out of existence.

While the numbers indicate a rapid advancement of Metis in gaining skills, scrutiny of where the skills are applied reveals the darker side of the picture. What it shows at the community level is that bright young Metis are being stripped from the very people who require their skills the most and put to work in settings where their skills are most easily exploited to the advantage of others.

A cursory examination of the data shows that the cities of Brandon, Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, The Pas and Thompson derive the major benefits from post-secondary advancement of the Metis. To illustrate, the ratio of Metis with post-secondary qualifications serving randomly selected census divisions is as follows:

C.D. 7 (Brandon only)	1:70
C.D. 9 (Portage only)	1:10
C.D. 11 (Winnipeg only)	1:80
C.D. 21 (including The Pas)	1:10
C.D. 21 (minus The Pas)	1:13
C.D. 22 (including Thompson)	1:13
C.D. 22 (minus Thompson)	1:20
C.D. 19 (unorganized)	1:28

Individual Metis are not to be scorned for advancing their education and then failing to return to remote communities to apply their skills. Public policy makes those decisions. Public policy determines who acquires resources, where investments are made, who can make investments, the terms and conditions of investment and resource use and, on this basis, the impact on small and large communities alike, as well as the fate of individual people.

Unfortunately, we were unable to develop a method of determining the number of highly skilled Metis who have left the province, or the country, in search of a place to use their abilities.

RECOMMENDATION: That financial resources be provided to access and support post-secondary education and training, and that this initiative be controlled and administered by Metis people. Furthermore, representative support be mandatory in the Kindergarten-to-Grade XII system, which would include academic and personnel support for Metis students and their families.

NOTES ON THE METIS WORKFORCE

Schedule E

The following chart provides a general summary of Metis men and women in Manitoba's workforce:

CENSUS DIVISION	MALE PARTICIPATION RATE	MALE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATE	FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	METIS AS A % OF POP.
1	74.10%	5.80%	49.00%	8.50%	2.74%
2	83.20%	3.90%	54.40%	8.10%	.76%
3	78.70%	3.30%	49.90%	6.50%	.64%
4	80.10%	1.40%	52.60%	5.00%	.13%
5	77.20%	2.10%	50.50%	5.70%	.30%
6	74.10%	5.00%	46.80%	7.30%	.31%
7	79.00%	5.50%	57.70%	8.80%	2.50%
8	77.70%	2.70%	50.20%	4.60%	.64%
9	77.90%	5.30%	54.90%	6.90%	3.42%
10	87.60%	3.30%	55.20%	6.40%	.61%
11	78.20%	7.70%	59.30%	8.20%	2.16%
12	79.80%	3.80%	53.40%	6.30%	.19%
13	78.70%	5.00%	57.30%	7.00%	2.11%
14	84.20%	3.10%	52.80%	6.30%	1.33%
15	72.30%	4.40%	48.50%	5.20%	.94%
16	73.80%	5.70%	43.60%	7.70%	1.61%
17	71.10%	7.50%	46.10%	6.30%	4.22%
18	72.90%	7.10%	47.90%	9.60%	3.86%
19	54.80%	34.20%	34.30%	28.40%	21.75%
20	74.30%	7.10%	48.30%	9.30%	4.57%
21	77.00%	12.90%	54.10%	14.00%	9.91%
22	68.30%	19.40%	48.60%	15.50%	10.79%
23	76.30%	13.10%	52.00%	20.50%	12.62%

Several factors should be borne in mind including:

1. With the exception of Division #19 the male female participation and unemployment rates did not vary all that much, between one another, at the census division level throughout the province with female participation shown as roughly two-thirds that of males and females unemployment rates roughly one-third higher than the male population. Without question, the old buffalo hunting grounds of the Metis fared the best.

2. The northern part of Manitoba, generally Division #19 to #23, have the highest concentration of Metis and showed a combination of the lowest participation and highest unemployment rates for both men and women.
3. When the census was taken in 1986, the northern part of the province with the high concentrations of Metis, was in the midst of a major economic boom driven by Manitoba Hydro at Limestone, high prices for forestry products, mining and a low Canadian dollar which attracted large numbers of tourists to the North, mainly from the U.S. where military spending was fuelling the American economy.
4. As with all other sectoral analysis, the broader picture, even at the census division level, masks the inequities at the community level where people must contend with the real world. In census division #1 the female participation rate averaged 49% for women. But in the community of Powerview, where the Metis comprise nearly 10% of the population, the female participation rate was 60.4%, nearly 12 percentage points higher than the division average. Their reward? An unemployment rate of 24.1%. In the same community, the male participation rate was 71.7%, or almost 3 percentage points lower than the average for the division. Yet, the male unemployment rate was 10.5%, or less than half that was faced by women.

In community after community throughout the province, particularly those communities with a high concentration of Metis to draw on for surplus labour, the situation is even worse than the Powerview example for all the Metis, which is compounded by even less stability for Metis women in the workforce. In Division #7, women's participation rate was 57.7% at the Division level with 2.5% of the population. Yet Metis women in Brandon, with 3.4% Metis population, had a participation level of 58.7% while contending with a 9.2% rate of unemployment while Metis men in Brandon, where the male participation rate was 79%, had a participation rate of 77% and an unemployment rate of 6%.

Northern Manitoba communities are too dismal in this regard to elaborate on here. Needless to say, the assumptions underpinning both "participation rates" and "unemployment rates" are cocked-up terms used to justify blaming the victims of an order that reserves opportunities for those with privileges by excluding those whose history is one of enduring exploitation.

Women raising the workforce for future generations, cooking and cleaning house for their husbands, tending gardens and all sorts of other things are, according to Canada's official record keeper, not participating in the workforce. Moreover, should they have a job, they tend to be the first fired or laid off so they can raise more babies and take better care of their husbands. Yet a Senator, who may choose to attend, or not attend, any duties they care to attend or not attend to, is officially participating in the workforce 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and receives a generous pension to prove how much Canadians appreciate their full participation and tendency not to become unemployed.

NOTES ON EMPLOYMENT AND INCOMES

Schedule F

The data for this section is extracted and compiled on three sets of Stats Can tables dealing with the way Manitobans earn their living. As with all information from official sources, information specific to the Metis must be imputed. That is, it is a relative measurement based on percentages of the population. While the information is far from precise, it nevertheless allows one to arrive at certain conclusions indicative to the condition of the Metis.

The tables are structured as follows:

Table F.1. provides an overview of part and full time employment, and the earnings there from, for all Manitobans and imputes the estimates for all Metis.

Table F.2.1. and Table F.2.2. provide the total numbers of Manitobans employed by gender, and shows whether their income was derived from wages and salaries or self-employment and compares the annual earnings of men to women.

Table F.3. breaks annual incomes for those 15 years and over with income, into 11 categories ranging from under \$1000 per year to over \$35,000 per year. Male and females are shown separately and the percentages of both men and women in each income category is calculated by census division.

ANALYSIS**TABLE F.1.**

Simply flicking through the tables reveals a number of factors related to conditions all Manitobans must contend with but show how the Metis are treated in a manner that is, to use the tenderest appropriate language, disproportionately harsh.

In C.D. #1, where the Metis comprise 2.74% of the population, 57% of the total division population have full time jobs averaging \$27,250 per annum while 43% hold part time employment at \$12,200 per annum. In other words, of a total wage and salary pot of \$91.5 million for the division, 2650 people received \$67 million while 2005 people received \$24.5 million. Numerous anomalies appear within the division which suggest striking disparities within each community as well as between communities. In Stuartburn, almost entirely non-Metis, the numbers of full time and part time workers are almost equal and annual incomes, while low, are relatively equal. In Powerview, with the highest concentration of Metis, where the workforce is split at 52% full time and 48% part time, incomes, while far higher than in Stuartburn, approximate equality between part and full time. In the enlightened, near Metis-free locations of Pinawa and the unorganized part of the division, where incomes are by far the highest, 75% of the Pinawa workforce is employed full time at an average exceeding \$38,000 while the 25% part time workers get by on less than a third of full time employees earnings, at \$11,150. In the unorganized part, the story nearly parallels the Pinawa situation which, as the home of one of the most highly educated workforces on the continent, leaves one with questions about education.

Throughout the rural, southern divisions the split between part and full time is approximately even at 60% part time and 40% full time, with part time workers earning roughly 50% of the annual income of full time workers.

The cities of Winnipeg, Brandon and Portage la Prairie, all with a substantial Metis population, keep about 40% of the labour force on part time and pay them a bit more than a third of a full time worker.

The real distortions do not show up till one looks at the mid and northern Manitoba census divisions. At first glance, one could compare the divisions heavily populated with Metis and conclude conditions are not all that bad. For example, a mid-Manitoba division like #17 appears to compare favourably, with full time average employment earnings of \$19,000 compared to its northern neighbour, division #19 with a full time average of about \$18,600. Things change somewhat when one sees that 43% of #17's workforce lives on part time earnings of \$9,800 compared to #19 where 76% of the people work part time for \$7,200 per year. As bad as this is, it gets far worse when comparing the different locations within a division to one another. In division #17, for example, 60% of income earners work full time for \$28,800 per year while the other 40% work part time for \$10,225 which is \$2,000 more than Alonsa's full time workers receive. Had Thompson not been part of #22, the division's full time earnings average would plummet to \$21,600 while the part time work force would receive about \$6,350 assuming that Thompson's departure would have no detrimental effects on earnings of other communities in the division.

With the disparities so glaring at the division and community levels, there can be no doubt about larger disparities, with accompanying privileges, within communities.

As is so often the case, people are victimized in all areas of their lives for no other reason than their race and gender. This will be demonstrated more clearly in the following tables.

Table F.2.1. and F.2.2.

Table F.2.1. shows the earnings and numbers of men who derived their income from either wages and salaries or via self-employment. It also shows the value society places on the work men do by census division and sub-division.

Table F.2.2. does the same for women.

At the division level, it is clear there is gender discrimination in terms of wages and self-employment. Using division #1 as a starting point again, we find that the total amount of earnings, from wages and salaries and self-employment, by both men and women, is approximately \$122.6 million. Out of this total, 4715 men received \$96.8 million while 2755 women received \$25.8 million.

In short, paid women's work in division #1 is valued at approximately 43.5% of paid men's work.

The disparities are less, however, when the average earnings of women in predominately non-Metis communities are compared to the earnings of men in predominately Metis communities within the same division. For example, women in Dauphin earn \$11,000 while men in Alonsa earn about \$11,400 which is roughly the same as male earnings in the unorganized part of divisions #19 where the dominant population are the Metis.

Table F.3.

With few exceptions, women's earnings tend to be roughly 40% to 60% that of men's earnings. And with few exceptions the imputed earnings of the Metis range from 40% to 60% of the non-Metis.

Even more dramatic is the number of people that live in the very low income brackets as measured in the 11 income categories. Women are particularly hard hit in this area.

In #11 (the city of Winnipeg) for example, 27.34% of the male population over 15 and earning incomes received less than \$15,000 per year. Women in the same income category comprised 54.59% of the female workforce earning income over 15 years of age. Higher income earners have the same characteristics: 3.86% of women workers earn over \$35,000 compared to 19.45% of men.

At the division level, beginning with #17, women's incomes tend to relatively equal to, or higher than, the income of men in certain categories. The problem is that nearly everyone is huddled in the lower income strata while a tiny minority, male and female alike, occupy the high income ground in most communities.

To make it abundantly clear the Metis Women of Manitoba have done their homework, and that we know what we are talking about, we suggest the Commission just take a brief glance at Table G.

Table G does not say all that much. It simply shows the average number of children per census family and the average number of persons per census family and economic family by census sub-division. A census family refers to the spouses, whether married or living common law or lone parents or never married children, all living in a household. An economic family simply refers to relatives living in the same dwelling on a certain amount of income.

One does not witness much evidence of large families until coming to divisions #19, #21, #22, and #23. Keep this in mind as you go through Table H.

Table H, which illustrates private household income, is enlightening in its own right but becomes even more enlightening when compared to Table G.

The important thing about Table H, as with all other data, is learning how to read and compare information so that it makes patterns clear. Division #1 had an average household income of \$27,700 to support an average economic family of 3.2 people. Yet, over 50% of the population lived on household incomes below \$25,000. Three communities had average incomes below \$25,000 and together, at 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, the family size equalled the average for the division meaning the majority of low income people in those communities cannot be older people,

bachelors and spinsters. Like nearly all communities, the people in those three low income communities were trying to raise families on household incomes below the established poverty line for 1986. These three low income communities are right next door to Pinawa where the average household income is 184% of the average for the division. But, even in Pinawa, the pride of Canada's nuclear establishment, which sucks up more public money per annum than we care to think about, there are 35 private households with incomes under \$25,000 which, if one is amongst the 270 Pinawa households with incomes in excess of \$50,000, is nice because it means someone is available to do housework or shovel snow cheap.

In the event one is inclined to sympathize with the low income people in Whitemouth, for example, relieve your anxiety a bit and flip over to division #19 where the annual household income averages \$18,250. Here, 76% of all households have incomes below \$25,000 and the average size of the economic family is 4.7. Or try the highest household income census division in the province, division #13, where the average is \$36,500 and the family size is a respectable 3.3 and only 37% of the households had incomes below \$25,000.

The point is that pockets are found in every community throughout the province. The difference is that, in the case of the Metis, poverty was never an issue until after 1870. Thereafter, it was adopted as a focal point of public policy. Metis women were hit with a double whammy. Being Metis was bad enough, being a Metis women was intolerable.

Table I, Incidence of Low Income; Table J, Low Income Households; Table K, Low Income Families; and Table L, Low Income Unattached Individuals, taken together or separately or combined, support the thesis that Manitoba and Canada have long been on a collision course with Metis people in general and Metis women in particular. The pattern is crystal clear, the men, women and children of the Metis Nation are at the bottom of the socio-economic order.

WHEN ALL THE EVIDENCE IS EXAMINED AND RE-EXAMINED IT IS APPARENT THAT METIS WOMEN POSSESS EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEVELS AT LEAST EQUAL TO, OR ABOVE, THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS OF METIS MEN, WHO IN TURN HAVE GENERAL SKILLS ROUGHLY COMPARABLE TO THE GENERAL MALE POPULATION. IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT METIS WOMEN HAVE AT LEAST EQUAL TO THAT OF THE GENERAL WOMEN'S POPULATION. BEYOND THAT, METIS WOMEN, AS WITH WOMEN GENERALLY, OFTEN HOLD DOWN A JOB WHILE PERFORMING ALL THE TASKS CONCERNING HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILIES THAT MANY WOMEN PERFORM. ONLY OUR HOUSING TENDS TO BE MORE CROWDED WITH LESS CONVENIENCES AND WE HAVE LARGER FAMILIES. IN TERMS OF INCOMES, METIS WOMEN GENERALLY RECEIVE APPROXIMATELY 60% OF THE INCOMES OF THE INCOMES RECEIVED BY MANITOBA WOMEN, WHO, IN TURN RECEIVE ABOUT 60% OF MALE INCOMES. IT DOES NOT HELP TO LEARN THAT METIS MEN RECEIVE APPROXIMATELY 60% OF NON-METIS INCOMES AND METIS WOMEN RECEIVE APPROXIMATELY 60% OF METIS MALE INCOMES.

Certainly the Prime Minister or the Premier can surround themselves with a handful of well-heeled Metis men, or a handful of well-heeled Metis women for that matter, at any time they choose.

Certainly it is always possible to pick out, or create, a 'poor Metis boy makes good' or 'poor Metis girl makes good' story, at any time they choose, to hail as a symbol of government achievement.

Some call this displaying a role-model; someone for all other Metis to emulate. The effect is the opposite. We may be Metis and we may be women, but stupid we are not. We know the intent is to have us internalize our difficulties; to blame ourselves for the results of public policy; or to blame those who should be our allies, while heaping credit on those who wield the power.

Our advice to the Commission is to inform the federal and provincial governments that 'the good old days' are over and 'the good old boys' would be wise to accept this as the new reality.

THE EFFECTS

Schedule G

Till this point the submission has dealt with poverty. Primarily this means the poverty and loss of power by Metis women in Manitoba. The Metis are poor, in financial terms, not because we are lazy or stupid, but because 123 years ago the government initiated measures to displace us hoping that we, along with other Aboriginal people, would eventually disappear.

The method, for a long period of time, was to push us further and further back, to try and make us disperse, to marginalize us.

Marginalizing us made it impossible for the Metis to have the stability to acquire the power essential to implementing decisions over matters that govern our lives.

For Metis women in particular, it meant living without the essentials required to avoid the disasters mainstream society regards as an aberration. Matters such as high levels of nutrition, ready access to good medical care, common practises to ensure low rates of infant mortality, a life style enabling the Metis to participate in one of the things Canada brags about to the rest of the world, longevity or living to a ripe old age, reasonably good housing...all these things regarded as normal features of Canadian life were denied to the Metis for a long period of time.

A simple glance through Table M allows the Commissioners to see that, in those census divisions and sub-divisions with a high concentration of Metis people, the payments for housing, whether rented or owned, tend to consume a far higher proportion of total household income than areas with a low concentration of Metis. Furthermore, Table M shows housing tends to be far more crowded in Metis communities than elsewhere.

The traditional response when poor and crowded housing conditions arises is that the Metis always have such large families. This notion appears to rest on the lop-sided logic that we would enjoy better housing if we stopped loving our children. Then we could all be like the fine people in the luxury areas of Winnipeg, Toronto, Calgary, or Vancouver, where, somehow it makes sense and people are praised, heaped with awards and lauded in all the circles of power for living, with at the most maybe one or two children, in a 15 room half million dollar house where no one needs to see another member of the family all day long so that the children can grow up, tended to by a nanny, all by themselves without having to worry about seeing or being with or loving or caring or being loved or cared about by the other occupants of the dwelling.

The Metis Women of Manitoba are definitely not scorning those who choose to have small families. All we are saying is that Metis women who choose to have large families should not be penalized, punished, or ridiculed for the choices we make.

But the effects extend beyond low incomes and crowded housing. As has been mentioned again in this presentation, the Metis were stripped of the means to hold power essential to exercise control over their lives. This was the basis of our impoverishment which, alongside ever increasing symbols of wealth and power enjoyed by other sectors of society in our former homeland, eventually took its toll which manifested itself in numerous social disorders. Alcoholism, family violence, drug abuse, crime, poor health care and lack of nutrition became, in many communities, features of routine daily life.

While Statistics Canada does not maintain data that specifically or implicitly illustrates vital statistics of the Metis, and while these statistics are not available to us from the Department of Vital Statistics, there are other authoritative studies measuring the effects of public policy on the Aboriginal population respecting matters such as nutrition, life expectancy, causes of death, incidence of violence and other yardsticks commonly used as indicators of long term exploitation and other forms of injustice.

These indicators are detailed with as much precision as possible in Table N. Since it was not possible to provide information that would be viewed as credible by governments on a community-by-community basis, as the Metis Women of Manitoba have done with all the other data, Appendix N contains material of a broader nature which is relevant to the circumstances of the Metis in Manitoba.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

Schedule H

The data shows very clearly that the Metis of Manitoba live in circumstances that were the entire country in a similar condition, would place Canada in the category of a Third World Nation.

Furthermore, we wish to stress that this is 1986 data. A lot has changed during the intervening seven years.

The year 1986 was a boom year in Manitoba. Things were happening, big things. The north, where so many of the Metis live, was alive with activity. Winnipeg was in the midst of a huge expansion. The slump had not even hit the farming community too hard at the time despite the federal government's rush to make a billion dollar pay out to grain producers.

The Metis, however, did not share in this bonanza, nor did many other people. The data portrays how the distribution of wealth during the golden era of the mid-1980's eluded us despite all the fine guarantees spelled out in the Constitution.

Once again, it is essential to re-iterate the fact that the source of our information is none other than the Government of Canada itself. In other words, the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba is fully aware of our circumstances. Or if they are not fully aware, one must ask why not. Are they asleep at the switch? Can governments not govern according to the most basic norms of justice and common decency? Or is it there hope somehow, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples will wave a magic wand and provide an easy solution?

Who knows?

As far as the raw data and our interpretation of the data is concerned, the Metis Women of Manitoba suggests that the Commission check our position against other authoritative sources. These include, for example, the data collected by the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission. While not as detailed or specific in terms of Metis women, the reports support the evidence we have compiled, at least as far the north is concerned. We also suggest the Commission study some special reports prepared by Statistics Canada. One is "Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 1991-1992", catalogue #85-211. Another publication worth studying is "Police-Reported Aboriginal Crime in Calgary, Regina, and Saskatoon" prepared by Stats Can's Centre for Justice Statistics which provides material supporting this presentation. A further Stats Can report released at the end of April this year, showing that average Canadians were financially worse off at the end of 1991 than at the end of 1980, underscores the importance of the critical nature of the Metis Women of Manitoba's plans for the future.

Therefore, to summarize the evidence in a nutshell, the Metis in Manitoba are fully aware of our circumstances and the reasons for our circumstances. We are fully aware of the fact we have made an immense contribution to the fortunes that benefit others. We are fully aware of all the details, and far more besides, that we have presented to the Commission.

And the Metis Women of Manitoba plan to work on the solution because, although we have been denied many things and endured all sorts of abuse, no one has yet devised a way of taking away our ability to think, our determination to act or our courage to take up the challenge.

MOVING FORWARD

Schedule I

Above everything else, the Metis Women want the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and the whole world, to clearly understand an elementary fact.

WE ARE NOT HERE TO WHINE AND COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR LOT IN LIFE. WE ARE PRESENTING THE FACTS RESPECTING OUR CURRENT SITUATION, AS ONE OF MANY STEPS ON THE ROAD TO DEALING WITH THE OVERALL PROBLEM OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT.

We know our history. We know our current situation. We know our strengths. And we know our weaknesses.

Few can lay claim to the foregoing with any certainty. The Metis Women of Manitoba no longer have doubts.

Based on the above we do not intend to dwell on the past or keep looking for scapegoats. We have plans which this Commission should be in a position to provide us with, specific assistance to begin the journey down the road to implementation. We are not asking the Commission for a great deal in this respect.

Our first request is based on our decision to establish the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc., as an independent body, separate and apart from and not, in any way, dependent on the Manitoba Metis Federation. This step should not be construed as meaning that the Metis Women of

Manitoba are at war with the Manitoba Metis Federation. All it means is that Metis Women require our own organization free of any restrictions or encumbrances of any kind which may, for whatever reason, be imposed on us or withheld from us, by the Manitoba Metis Federation or any other body.

To accomplish this part of our task, and to speed the process, we request the Commission to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible date with federal and provincial authorities to arrange for the required assistance.

The second request is based on our decision to become actively involved in overcoming the problem of underdevelopment.

This decision means that the Metis Women of Manitoba will become actively engaged in economic development.

As with all economic development plans, the nature and scope cannot become public knowledge till such time as the proper arrangements are made and the prospects for implementation are assured. Therefore, the only reference we can make regarding our economic development initiative in this presentation is to signal our intent.

This leads directly to the second request we wish to make to the Commission. As with all economic development plans, it is essential to disclose our plans, in confidence, to the appropriate government authorities at the provincial and federal levels. Therefore, we request the Commission to arrange for meetings at the earliest possible date, between representatives of the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc., and the appropriate federal and provincial authorities at the Ministerial or Deputy Minister levels. There is some urgency in this matter and we suggest it will be mutually beneficial for these meetings to be held as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this process, beginning with the decision to make a submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, throughout the preparation and re-preparation of this document, right up to, and including, presenting our submission to you today, we have endeavoured at all times, to adhere to a strict code of integrity, credibility, realism and honesty in our relationships with one another and the Commission.

Maintaining this course meant that, at times, we have stated things about which others may have preferred we remain silent. Being frank and open is not always nice and it is seldom easy.

We thank the Commission and the staff for your attention and await your report.

Table N

**PRESENTATION TO THE
ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES
BY THE
METIS WOMEN OF MANITOBA INC.**

METIS HEALTH CONDITIONS

Canada is seen on the world stage as a country that, year after year, is at, or near, the top of the field in every category of health care. From low rates of stillbirths and perinatal deaths to longevity, Canadians are believed to outrank all, or nearly all, other countries on the planet.

The fact that the general Canadian population is able to achieve this status despite the fact that Aboriginal people's health and nutrition conditions within Canada is far below average in the most critical areas suggests that, without our Aboriginal population, Canada would be light years ahead of all other countries in every category.

Beyond the foregoing, Canada has placed the health conditions of the Metis portion of the Aboriginal population of Manitoba under wraps making it literally impossible to secure accurate data on vital statistics in a manner that would enable the Metis to know what our specific health conditions are.

Worse still is the fact that some health care workers who would like to uncover more of the facts respecting Aboriginal health conditions are prevented from doing so by self-styled "human rights" lawyers advising government that taking the actions required to secure answers to specific health problems encountered by the Metis would violate our rights to privacy. To put their argument in its proper context, it means they advocate the best course is to remain ignorant on life and death matters.

Based on the foregoing, the Metis Women of Manitoba have adopted the following assumptions respecting an analysis of the health conditions of the Metis in Manitoba:

1. With the exception of certain specific health problems, many already well-known, the majority of health problems are not a factor of race. Certain specific conditions, such as the susceptibility of people of Scandinavian origin to blindness due to glaucoma or the susceptibility of Afro-American people to sickle-cell anemia seems, at present, to be factor of race but has little to do with overall health conditions of either race. The early susceptibility of First Nations to communicable diseases such as small pox is attributable to the absence of this disease from First Nations which, in turn, resulted in the lack of immune systems in their bodies to limit the effects of the disease. Therefore, the extra-ordinarily high death rate from communicable diseases endured by First Nations was not caused by genetic or racial disorders but by an absence of these diseases amongst their population prior to the arrival of Europeans.

2. There's a direct correlation between the state of a people's health and the state of their economic circumstances. While it's quite possible for a rich individual to suffer ill-health and a poor individual to enjoy good health, this is an exception. In general terms, physical and mental health is a factor of economic and social well-being. In the official words of the government of Canada itself:

"Comparison of the Indian and non-Indian populations is of primary concern since the health of Indians (as well as other Aboriginal peoples) has long been shown to be substantially poorer than other Canadians. As a culturally distinct, often geographically isolated, and socioeconomically disadvantaged population, Manitoba's Indians experience particular problems which require special efforts from the health care system."

Source: "Vital Statistics 1989, Manitoba First Nations", published by Health and Welfare Canada.

3. Large numbers of Metis live in rural and remote communities as do large numbers of First Nations. First Nations have certain advantages in the areas of some tax-free earnings on reserves, a federally funded social assistance program, a federal core funding program for their communities, community schools and support for higher education, community nursing stations, medical translation services and other resources that the Metis people in Manitoba are denied or, where they are provided, are subject to wild fluctuations at the whim of finance ministers and program administrators. Along with the foregoing, roughly the same proportion of Metis and First Nations people live in remote communities, rural communities and urban centres. On this basis, coupled with the evidence and analysis of the previous tables respecting the economic circumstances of the Metis, in particular Metis women, earlier in this submission, the Metis Women of Manitoba submit the health conditions of the Metis people of Manitoba approximate those of the First Nations of Manitoba.

Aside from #3 (above), Health and Welfare Canada provide statistics respecting First Nations that simply are not available regarding the Metis population. Therefore, taking into account the socio-economic condition of the Metis, the history of the Metis and where the Metis live in the province, it seems likely that our health conditions would more closely resemble the health conditions of First Nations in Manitoba than the conditions of the general Manitoba population.

For these reasons, certain data are included from Health and Welfare Canada regarding health conditions of First Nations as "indicative" of potential health conditions amongst the Metis.

POTENTIAL YEARS OF LOST LIFE

To quote from Health and Welfare Canada's 1989 Report on Manitoba First Nations: "A measure of the potential years of lost life is a sensitive gauge of the premature mortality in a population." Health and Welfare Canada has found a civil way of saying that the potential years of lost life (PYLL) is a means of measuring how effectively the larger society kills an unwanted portion of its minority.

The PYLL is a measurement that provides an estimate of the total number of years of life lost before age 70 for all members of the population who died between their first and 70th birthday due to all causes or any particular cause. It's vital to keep in mind that PYLL DOES NOT include stillbirths, perinatal deaths or any other death before the first birthday.

YEAR	INDIAN PYLL RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION	NON-INDIAN PYLL RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION
1980	102.4	51.4
1981	144.8	54.0
1982	106.0	50.5
1983	89.5	51.3
1984	102.6	45.7
1985	109.7	46.7
1986	90.7	48.6
1987	111.5	46.0
1988	104.5	45.4
1989	85.2	46.8
5 year average 1980 to 1984	109.0	51.0
5 year average 1985 to 1989	103.8	46.5
<i>Source: Medical Services Branch, Manitoba Region Annual Report, page 45, Table 23</i>		

One of the more noticeable features of the chart is that Aboriginal people, who started the decade with twice the PYLL rate of non-Aboriginal people, had an increase of 7 points in the first half of the decade compared to the non-Aboriginal decrease of .4. For the second half of the 1980's, the Aboriginal PYLL was down to approximately 1.5 points higher than it was at the beginning of the decade while the non-Aboriginal PYLL had decreased a further 4.5 points below the starting point in 1980.

The inference is clear. An Aboriginal child and a non-Aboriginal child can meet one day after their first birthday with the Aboriginal child looking forward to another 34 years of life while the non-Aboriginal child looks forward to at least another 69 years. Ten years later, the span shortens a bit for a year old Aboriginal child and lengthens a bit for a year old non-Aboriginal child.

All the indicators suggest that, if statistics were available on the Metis in Manitoba, they would be no different than the PYLL data on First Nations.

ABORIGINAL MOTHERS AND BABIES

Reaching their first birthday is tougher for Aboriginal babies compared to non-Aboriginal babies. After conception, the first hurdle is getting born. All too often the mother dies needlessly before she even knows she's pregnant.

Sexually-transmitted diseases are one contributor to child-bearing problems.

Chlamydia, for example, is a sexually-transmitted disease that infects both men and women. With men, the disease seldom shows any symptoms and, if symptoms do occur, it's normally long after contact. Women, on the other hand, become infected immediately but often don't know it since the attack is on their reproductive organs with few outward signs at the onset of the disease. However, women are normally "screened" during their child-bearing years where Chlamydia is often first detected. The body immediately begins to defend itself by creating antibodies which attach the virus-like invader which, in turn, builds up its own defense mechanism. The result is massive scarring of the reproductive system often reaching the stage where female organs become attached to other internal organs via scar tissue. The first stage of scarring blocks the entry of the sperm to the womb causing tubal pregnancies that rupture causing almost certain death since the woman, unaware of her condition, delays the critical immediate medical help required to save her from death via poison released by the rupture which, in every sense of the word, has become an internal sewer.

To make matters worse, Chlamydia seems to be accepted as a woman's disease. The apparent reason is that, due to being the child-bearers and the screening process, Chlamydia is detected earlier in women. Even with these precautions, the diagnosis is often wrong and women, mistakenly, walk out of the doctor's office relieved to learn they've acquired a harmless yeast infection. Therefore, men can spread the disease wittingly or unwittingly and bring it right into their own families.

In 1992 the rate of incidence of Chlamydia discovered in Manitoba reached over 5,000 females per 100,000 population in the 15 to 25 year age group with a rate of 3,000 per 100,000 in the 15 to 19 year old range. By comparison, the rate for men was only 1,400 per 100,000 population in the 15 to 25 year age group.

Dr. Ann Jolly, epidemiologist with the Manitoba Department of Health, provided a verbal profile of those who tend to be carriers of sexually-transmitted diseases. In general terms, they are young men in the 14 to 30 age group from economically and socially deprived homes, drink a lot, are unemployed or underemployed, drive recklessly, are often transient between rural or remote locations and larger centres, often with a poor school record and poor home life, totally lacking in ambition, no self-worth, very low self-esteem, problems with the law and so on. In other words, they fit into a socioeconomic profile that's often used to stereotype Aboriginal people since we are more visible than non-Aboriginal men and women who are also afflicted with these, and other, diseases that affect not only ourselves, but the unborn.

See attached Charts A.1 and A.2 regarding Chlamydia in Manitoba and Charts B.1, B.2, B.3 and B.4 regarding Gonorrhoea. In Charts A.1 and B.1, it's impossible not to notice the rates of incidence amongst children of these two sexually-transmitted diseases. In a paper published by Manitoba Health in January 1992, entitled "Health Status In The Interlake: An Overview", authors Ann Jolly and Elana Goldberg, suggest that sexually-transmitted diseases detected in children are a sign of sexually-abused children.

The 1989 Vital Statistics Report on Manitoba First Nations revealed other important facts regarding public policy pertaining to Aboriginal babies including:

1. The perinatal (stillbirths and early neonatal deaths) mortality rate exceeds non-Aboriginal perinatal mortality rate by 31%.
2. Aboriginal stillbirth rates exceed non-Aboriginal stillbirth rates by 24%.
3. Early neonatal (0 to 6 days) of Aboriginal babies are 45% higher than for non-Aboriginal babies.
4. The Aboriginal infant mortality (0 to 364 days) is 24% higher than the non-Aboriginal infant mortality rate.
5. Breaking #4 (above) down into components, it's found that the neonatal (0 to 6 days) mortality rate of Aboriginal babies averaged 1.9 times higher than non-Aboriginal babies during 1985 to 1989 while the post-neonatal (28 to 364 days) mortality rate of Aboriginal babies was 1.7 times higher than non-Aboriginal babies during the same period.

For those tempted to believe that the imbalances shown above are caused by uncaring mothers living out in the bush, the following may be enlightening:

LOCATION	RATE* OF LIFE SPAN OF ABORIGINAL BABIES		
	0 TO 6 DAYS	27 TO 364 DAYS	DIED IN THEIR 1ST YEAR
Remote	5.3	5.3	10.6
Rural	7.4	4.0	11.4
Urban	4.8	5.5	10.3
<i>*Rate is based on per thousand births.</i>			

Those who take the time to examine the chart will find, amongst other things, that while it's true that the highest incidence of deaths in the 0 to 6 day period occurred in rural areas and the lowest death rate for this period was in urban centres, it's equally true that, during the 27 to 364 day period, exactly the opposite took place.

Nonetheless, the evidence clearly shows that, overall, the highest rate of infant mortality (the first year) occurred in rural areas followed by remote communities with urban infant mortalities the lowest for Aboriginal people. Even including the lower rate of infant mortality in urban centres, the rate is unacceptably high. To quote, again, from "Vital Statistics 1989 Manitoba First Nations":

"The most important causes of infant mortality for Indians in 1989 were injury and poisoning, prematurity/low birth weight and the sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The greatest excesses in Indian infant mortality occurred for injury and poisoning and SIDS, 6 and 3 times the non-Indian rates respectively."

While the report does not emphasize it, the fact remains that the "rate" of Indian infant mortality is, indeed, 6 and 3 times the non-Indian "rate" respectively. Yet, exactly the same actual numbers of Indian babies died due to prematurity/low birth weights as died of injury, poisoning and SIDS. The "rate" factor is skewed due to comparatively lower numbers of non-Indian babies dying from injury, poisoning and SIDS relative to prematurity/low birth weight.

GROWING UP AND DYING

Chart C compares the Indian to non-Indian age and sex specific mortality rates from all causes in Manitoba during 1989. There are several points worth noting:

1. Male and female Indian infants in the 0 to 4 year category together tended to die at a rate 480% higher than non-Indian infants.
2. During the adolescent years of 5 to 14, Indian children died at a rate 150% above non-Indian adolescents.
3. Indian teenagers and youths in the 15 to 24 year old group died at a rate equivalent to 145% above non-Indian young people.
4. Through the most productive years of their lives, normally the 25 to 44 year group, Indian men and women died at a rate of 200% faster than non-Indians.
5. Suddenly, during the 45 to 64 year group, non-Indian death rates were 117% that of Indian death rates. And after 65 years of age the gap widened to 128% in favor of non-Indians. What's the most plausible explanation? No one knows in either the Medical Services Branch or the Manitoba Department of Health. Maybe it's fairly simple, such as all the young Indians died early in life.

The real issue is, however, what stance would public policy adopt if the percentages suddenly switched for the 0 to 44 year age groups???

As stipulated at the outset, the Metis Women of Manitoba do not have access to the same type of information the Government of Canada has provided pertaining to First Nations. However, due to our socioeconomic circumstances, our history, our culture and our locations within the Province of Manitoba, we feel Metis health patterns closely parallel that of First Nations.

Supporting evidence is provided by looking at Chart D, the map showing Manitoba Health Regions; and Chart D.1, the total population of each health region shown by age groups. The percentage of the provincial population by region is:

Central	8.39%	
Eastman	7.79%	
Interlake	6.63%	
Norman	2.19%	
Parklands	4.16%	
Thompson	4.30%	
Westman	10.27%	(includes the City of Brandon)
Winnipeg	56.26%	

*NOTE: The percentages include First Nations within each Health Region.

When the above population percentages are applied to the Manitoba Health Region map and compared to Chart E (Death Rates per 10,000 Population, 1991, Manitoba Health Statistical

Bulletin), one finds a very close approximation to First Nation death rates shown in Chart C in those health regions with the highest concentration of Metis people. Unquestionably, these are also the areas with the highest concentration of First Nations. Some may argue that this simply reflects the high mortality rate of First Nations and does nothing to indicate poor health conditions or high mortality rates among the Metis. Defenders of the status quo will always grasp at any straw to ensure ignorance prevails.

The Metis Women of Manitoba have studied, and know, the health conditions amongst First Nations. We have studied, and know, the socioeconomic conditions of the Metis people in Manitoba. We have studied, and know, the correlation between socioeconomic conditions and the health and well-being of a people.

Based on the above, we can only surmise that the health conditions of the Metis are similar in most respects to First Nations. We deplore these conditions for ourselves as well as for First Nations.

However, until we know precisely what our health conditions are as a people, we bear a double burden. Like First Nations, we are socially and economically deprived for the simple reason that we are Aboriginal people. Unlike First Nations, the area of health, we are deprived of information respecting our conditions that would enable us to deal more effectively with health problems because, it seems, public policy attempts to divide Aboriginal people by according different treatment to different groups.

We know the game by now. It will not work.

RECOMMENDATION

That The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples assist the Metis Women of Manitoba Inc. to negotiate an arrangement with Health and Welfare Canada aimed at developing a comprehensive method of identifying health needs for Metis people in the Province of Manitoba.