

*[Prior to 1867] the primary organizing structure of native life was the extended family. When the federal government came into their lives, they imposed the **Indian Act** . The federal government institutionalized the band as a form of government. Basically, what happened was a number of extended families were put together [as a band] to live on lands now called reserves. Often several extended families were put on these reserves and were given a book of rules, the Indian Act , by which they governed themselves...*

They had to elect officials to govern them. They were allowed to govern on condition that the [federal] Indian agent, so to speak, approved everything they did...

Over 100 years, or 120 years, you can imagine the kind of conflict that leaves in the community. This imposition of the Indian Act , the band structure, and extended families being forced to live with each other...

Minutes , Issue 6, pp.14-15, 29 October 1991

Among the *Indian Act's* legatees are status Indians who occupy reserve lands in isolated regions of this country. Reserve communities generally comprise fewer than 500 persons and their residents receive services through local governments made up of chiefs and band councils.

The *Indian Act*, however, is far from inclusive. For one reason or another, many Aboriginal people never obtained the status of 'Indian' under the Act. Either they were never registered or they lost their status under various provisions of the Act and have never applied for, or are ineligible for, reinstatement. The Métis people, for example, although now recognized as Aboriginal people in

