

# Metis aim for self-government

"The Metis Association of Alberta is working presently to help set up local self-governments in Metis Communities," said Stan Daniels, President of the Association.

There are 2,600 Metis people living on eight Metis colonies in Northern Alberta who have self governing local councils governing the affairs of their people. But there are 40,000 more Metis people scattered throughout Alberta, the majority living as communities which have weak or no self-governing bodies to decide their fate.

"The Metis Association's top priority work at present is to help establish locals or self-governing democratic bodies in Metis communities where they do not exist today," said Mr. Daniels.

"We are not out to destroy any existing native local organization but we are out to help strengthen them."

Mr. Daniels said that Metis people in the province must be organized at the grassroots first if they are to be strong at the Provincial level.

"The Treaty Indians in the province are at an advantage at this time because every band in the province has a self-governing unit. Metis people on the other hand have a lot of work to do to come up to level of organization of their Treaty Indian brothers," Mr. Daniels said.

"By 1970, the Metis Association hopes to have 50 strong, organized democratic locals in Metis communities," said Mr. Daniels, "already we have applications from 15 Metis community organizations."

When organized, local Metis community organizations are entitled for membership into the Metis Association of Alberta and have a voting power to decide in the affairs of the Association.

"The long range plan for work of the Association is divided into three stages," said Mr. Daniels. "First we must have organization. Second, when the Metis people have organized they must systematically plan, with all the Human Resources available, solutions to many problems they face as a group and finally when they have found and agreed to solutions develop means of carrying out those solutions."

"We have a lot of work to do and we cannot do it without the help of trained educated people," Mr. Daniels explained.

"There are a lot of Metis people in the cities who are teachers, doctors and lawyers. The Metis people need the help of these people, he said.

Speaking of critics, Mr. Daniels said "that a lot of people feel that the Association should start its own housing program and solve the poverty situation with the \$120,000 grant they received earlier from the government. If there are 60,000 Metis people in the province that entitles them only \$2.00 each. What the hell can each Metis do with that."

Mr. Daniels re-emphasized that the Metis people must organize first. "But it is up to themselves to do it. The Association is there to help them."

Mr. Daniels told "Native People" that the Metis Association of Alberta are sponsoring a very important meeting Nov. 22, at the auditorium of NAIT in Edmonton.

It is being called to bring together Metis leaders from across Canada for an all out discussion on need for a national Metis Organization. He said, "It is a fact that Metis people in Canada have not been recognized by the Federal Government since the death of Louis Riel."

"We have not had representation in the Federal Government since Louis Riel himself sat in the House of Commons. We need Federal recognition and representation now," he added.

The need for representation at the Federal level will be on the agenda for discussion at the Nov. 22 meeting said Mr. Daniels.

At the Nov. 22 meeting Metis leaders from the three prairie provinces, Ontario and British Columbia will be discussing the still unsettled question of land script. Metis people had been promised 6,000,000 acres of land by an act of Parliament in 1887. There are still a lot of unsettled Metis land claims, he said.

"The issue of land script must be reopened so the Metis people can find out what went wrong and find out where they stand as a people with both Federal and Provincial Governments," Mr. Daniels concluded.

## Two views

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### ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL INDIAN BROTHERHOOD:

The average age of death for adult Indians is 34 for women and 33 for men.

Forty-seven per cent of Canadian Indian families earn less than \$1,000 a year.

Forty per cent of them live on welfare.

Nearly 60 per cent live in houses of three rooms or less, compared to a national aver-

age of 11 per cent, and only 9 per cent of these houses have toilets.

Only 44 per cent of them have electricity.

Forty per cent of them enter school unable to speak or understand English or French.

Sixty-one per cent of Indian children fail to reach Grade 8.

Ninety-seven per cent fail to reach Grade 12.

The infant mortality rate for pre-school Indian children is eight times the white rate.

—Canadian Magazine



—from Tom K. Ryan's "Tumbleweeds"

"The Native People" is a monthly publication of The Alberta Native Communications Society.

Published in Edmonton the paper covers provincial native news and attempts to establish communications among native communities.

The paper also serves to reflect native views on current matters. For example "The Native People" has published native views on the Federal White Paper on Indian Policy and current attitudes toward education.

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