

CEC Presentation by Garry McLean

First Nations Treaties With Manitoba

I want to thank the CEC Panel for hearing my presentation today. My presentation centers around the issue of 'First Nations Treaties With Manitoba.' The main purpose of this presentation is to inform and educate the CEC Panel, Manitoba Hydro Panelists, and the public at large on the importance of recognizing all our Treaties in Manitoba.

Firstly, as I begin this presentation, I will very briefly describe who I am. I am a member of the Lake Manitoba Treaty 2 First Nation in the Province of Manitoba's Interlake region. My First Nation community is situated along Lake Manitoba and we are an Ojibway First Nation and we speak Saulteaux Ojibway. I am a former elected Councillor and I've served a number of terms with various elected Councils in my community and I am a former Political Advisor for three Manitoba Grand Chiefs of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. I am fluent in my Native Saulteaux Ojibway language. I have one daughter and one granddaughter and they are Band members of the Lake Manitoba Treaty 2 First Nation.

Currently, I am a Co-Publisher of the Manitoba Aboriginal newspaper entitled, 'Weetamah Newspaper', and I am also a Board Director of the non profit Manitoba Aboriginal organization which is provincially incorporated under the name, C.A.I.T.O. Society Inc.(C.A.I.T.O., stands for Canadian Aboriginals Intellectually & Technologically Observing).

Please find in front of you on our large projector screen(signal with your hand) a sample of a Map of Manitoba indicating the various First Nations communities of our province. Various Manitoba First Nations communities have entered into Treaties with the Government of Canada beginning around the year 1871. First Nations and Government of Canada treaties in Manitoba involve Treatie(s) Number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, and adhesions for Treaty Number 5.

Some Manitoba First Nations communities have signed Treaties as recently as in the last 15 years including the Marcel Colomb First Nation in March 1999 and the O-pipon-Na-Piwin First Nation in December 2005. Marcel Colomb First Nation was originally known as the Black Sturgeon Band and the O-pipon-Na-Piwin First Nation was called South Indian Lake. Marcel Colomb First Nation separated from the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation and O-pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation separated from the Nisicawaysihk Cree Nation.

Many First Nations communities in Manitoba are part of Treaties which more or less have been negotiated originally in the Province of Saskatchewan, including Treaties 10, Treaty 6, and Treaties 4 at Fort Qu'Appelle. Buffalo Point First Nation in Manitoba's southeast region is part of the Treaty 3 territory which lies mainly in Ontario.

Additionally, there are some Sioux First Nations in Manitoba that are existing without a Treaty with the Government of Canada including Sioux Valley, Dakota Tipi, Canupawakpa, Dakota Plains, and Birdtail Sioux. These First Nations communities have yet to enter into Treaty with Canada in respect of their traditional territories.

Furthermore, the Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.(MMF) has been pursuing a 'Land Claims Settlement' in the Supreme Court of Canada based on an historical agreement which resulted in the creation of our great Province. It has been said that perhaps this historical agreement between Ottawa and the Metis Nation of Manitoba is a Treaty. That remains to be clarified and settled in our federal courts.

Treaties and First Nations in Manitoba have some unique and interesting features. For instance, if you look closer at Treaty Number 2 of which my First Nation, Lake Manitoba Treaty 2 First Nation is a signatory to that Treaty, you can see that there are Manitoba First Nations that are signed onto other Numbered Treaties and yet they are located in traditional Treaty 2 territory including Gamblers(Treaty 4), Pine Creek(Treaty 4), Rolling River(Treaty 4), and Tootinaowaziibeeng First Nations(Treaty 4).

Tribal Councils have been created in Manitoba to assist First Nations communities to work together in community sectors such as housing, education, and health and to build capacity in these areas of mutual interest. What is unique in the make-up of these Tribal Council groupings of Manitoba First Nations is the fact that member First Nations communities that have close kinship and family bloodline and close historical and cultural ties such as the Sandy Bay, Ebb&Flow, and Lake Manitoba First Nations, these same three First Nations are members of three Tribal Councils. Sandy Bay First Nation is part of the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council; Ebb&Flow First Nation is part of the West Region Tribal Council, and Lake Manitoba First Nation was formerly part of the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council and it is now an Independent First Nation.

In any First Nation, you realize a fact of life in these communities, which is the simple fact that the local Chief&Councils of a First Nation community oversee a substantial amount of the financial and funding decisions in their respective communities. Having observed this, you also realize that political affiliations in Manitoba First Nations communities can be complex; within the local First Nation and outside of it.

For example, the Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, is part of the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council. The Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council recognizes the importance of the historical Sioux tribes that lived generations ago in what we now view as southern Manitoba. Recently, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation pulled out of the Southern Chiefs' Organization, a First Nation political organization made up of 34 southern Manitoba First Nations and it is still a member of the Assembly of

Manitoba Chiefs political organization. The Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council, the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council, the Southeast Resource Development Council, and the West Region Tribal Council make up the four Tribal Councils of the Southern Chiefs' Organization. The remaining three Tribal Councils including the Keewatin Tribal Council, Swampy Cree Tribal Council, and the Island Lake Tribal Council are under the umbrella of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

What is important to realize in respect of any Manitoba Tribal Council and any Manitoba First Nation political organization such as the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs(AMC), Southern Chiefs' Organization(SCO), and the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.(MKO) is the fact that all of these First Nations organizations are governed by a Board of Directors made up only of Manitoba First Nations chiefs. So, we see if you are dealing with any Manitoba Tribal Council or any Manitoba First Nation political organization such as the three main ones in Manitoba, that is, the AMC, MKO, and SCO, you need to realize that you are dealing with our Manitoba chiefs.

Recently, in Beasejour, the Premier of Manitoba, Greg Selinger held up a copy of this book(hold your copy of your Treaties Of Manitoba Book) in front of the NDP party of Manitoba and proclaimed his recognition of this informative and educational book on the Treaties of Manitoba. All Manitobans including the members of the CEC Panel and the members of the Manitoba Hydro panel participating at these CEC hearings should have copies of this book and they should study and research this book. Especially in light of the fact our Manitoba Premier has recognized this book and no doubt is studying it.

In the past, hydro projects such as the one related to the Northern Flood Agreement(NFA) have overlooked our historical agreements between the First Nations and Canada. Our First Nations peoples have paid the price in the devastations of their traditional territories.

Today, at these CEC hearings and in past CEC hearings here in Manitoba, the First Nations leadership and members will no longer tolerate overlooking our Treaties. There are no time limits to our historical Treaties of this great land we call Canada and Manitoba. They will exist so long as 'The Sun shines, the Grass grows, and the Rivers flow.'

As you move forward in your endeavors to establish another Manitoba hydor project, the Bipole III project, please take the time to study, research, review, and understand our Treaties. They are sacred agreements between the First Peoples of this land and past, present, and future Canadians. Let's learn to live and work together. And let's not forget the importance and historical significance of our nation-to-nation agreements in the Manitoba Treaties.

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FIRST NATIONS AND TREATY AREAS IN MANITOBA

