

Opening Remarks of
President Clément Chartier
Métis National Council to
The Saskatchewan Forum 2012
Regina, Saskatchewan
May 30, 2012

I welcome this Forum as an opportunity to address the critical question of how the western provinces and, in this case, Saskatchewan can balance their economic growth and labor market demands with the needs and aspirations of the Métis population.

While the Métis population of 400,000 is only one third of the total Aboriginal population in Canada, we are the largest single Aboriginal people and nation, that is, a people with a common history, culture and political will.

We also have the fastest growing youth population in western Canada.

The federal and provincial governments and industry are grappling with an acute skills shortage going forward.

The Métis can become a big part of the solution or a big part of the problem.

The Métis National Council and its five provincial affiliates or Governing Members, including the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, and their affiliated institutions have played a major role over the past few decades in bringing the Métis labor force participation rate close to that of the general population.

We have built an effective Métis Nation employment and training infrastructure across the five westernmost provinces as well as Métis financial institutions that have supported business expansion and job creation.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, both affiliated with Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, have proven to be engines of economic growth for the Métis people in

Saskatchewan through their respective functions of education and training and business financing.

At the same time, Métis communities face historical and legal barriers to participation in major resource development projects due to the lack of a land base with natural resources and legally recognized Métis governments.

This impacts on industry's approach to dealing with us, either ignoring or discounting our interest when the Duty to Consult is delegated to them by the Crown for major projects.

We have been making some progress in surmounting these barriers.

We are working with the federal Minister, his counterparts from the five westernmost provinces, and industry on the development of a Métis economic development strategy by 2013.

Through a series of regional engagement sessions, we are identifying those employment, training, and procurement policies and practices that are yielding results and will figure in the strategy.

We are also looking at resource revenue agreements that will ensure that local Métis communities participate effectively in major projects.

The Métis Nation of Ontario has entered into an important impact benefit agreement with Detour Gold.

The Métis Nation British Columbia and Métis Nation of Alberta are negotiating an equity interest in the Northern Gateway Pipeline with Enbridge.

This is the type of arrangement we would like to see developed in Saskatchewan to ensure Métis communities are meaningfully involved.

