



Grand Council Treaty #3

Office of the Ogichidaa

P.O. BOX 1720
Kenora, Ontario P9N 3X7
Ph: (807) 788-1406
Fax: (807) 548-4776

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2023

Grand Council Treaty #3 Rejects Métis Claim as Treaty Participant, Opposes Proposed MNO Self-Government Legislation

Agency 1 Reserve near Fort Frances, Ontario May 4, 2023: Grand Council Treaty #3 is calling on the Government of Canada to cease any and all steps towards implementing the recent *Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement between Canada and the Métis Nation of Ontario*, pointing to grave concerns about Métis claims to Treaty #3 and Canada's failure to consult with the Anishinaabe Nation who entered into Treaty #3 with the Crown.

"Our Treaty, entered into with the Crown in the presence of the Creator, is sacred," explained Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh. "We are extremely concerned that our Treaty partner has entered into an agreement with the Métis Nation of Ontario recognizing the 'Northwestern Ontario Métis Community', who erroneously claim a connection to and rights through our Treaty, as a section 35 rights-bearing collective." (Section 35 refers to that section in the *Constitution Act, 1982* which recognizes and affirms the "existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada").

In 2017, the Government of Canada entered into an agreement with the Métis Nation of Ontario regarding the "Northwestern Ontario Métis Community", some of whom mistakenly claim to be descendants of a Métis collective that adhered to Treaty #3 in 1875 through what is referred to as the "Halfbreed Adhesion." Through that 2017 Agreement, Canada agreed to negotiate with the MNO to settle outstanding claims of the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community, including claims relating to the Halfbreed Adhesion. Canada also agreed to consult other Indigenous groups whose Aboriginal or Treaty rights might be affected by negotiations relating to the Northwestern Ontario Métis.

The *Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement* builds on this 2017 Agreement by committing the parties to resolving outstanding Métis claims against Canada, including claims being addressed through the 2017 Agreement. It appears Canada has undertaken negotiations with the Métis Nation of Ontario but has not consulted other Indigenous groups, including specifically the Anishinaabe Nation that entered into Treaty #3, and Canada's commitment to this Agreement being a "Nation-to-Nation" Treaty.

"The so-called 'Halfbreed Adhesion' is not a Métis addition to our Treaty," explained Chief Brian Perrault of Couchiching First Nation. "It's an adhesion through which our mixed-blood Anishinaabe ancestors were welcomed into Treaty as Anishinaabe. We had an inclusive vision of citizenship, not an exclusionary one. It was possible to have one French-Scottish parent and one Anishinaabe parent and still be Anishinaabe. You were still our kin. When our ancestors were negotiating Treaty #3, we made it clear that the 'halfbreeds among us' in the Rainy River adjacent Ojibway communities were our kin and part of our Nation, to be

included in the Treaty. The reserve promised in the ‘Halfbreed Adhesion’ is now part of the amalgamated Couchiching reserve. The descendants of that adhesion are our members; they are Anishinaabe.”

Both Ogichidaa Kavanaugh and Chief Perrault state that they have never heard their Elders speak of a Métis community existing in the Rainy River/Fort Frances area in the 1870s, or of any Métis collective being part of Treaty #3. They also state that neither Canada nor the Métis Nation of Ontario have ever provided them with any research or information to support their claim that the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community is tied to a historic Métis community in the area or have any claims or rights through Treaty #3.

“I wrote to Minister Miller last October explaining the connection between Couchiching First Nation and the ‘Halfbreed Adhesion’ and asking for formal consultation if Canada was indeed negotiating with the Métis Nation of Ontario, especially as it relates to Treaty #3. I never got a response,” said Chief Perrault. “Canada entered into an agreement in 2017 saying it would consult and is intentionally disregarding that.”

“150 years ago, at the signing of Treaty #3, Chief Mawendopenais stated: ‘And now before you all, Indians and whites, let it never be said that this has been done in secret. It is done openly and in the light of day,’” explained Ogichidaa Kavanaugh.

“Now, as we prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the signing of Treaty #3, our Treaty partner appears ready to run roughshod over that sacred agreement, and the mutual commitment to openness and transparency,” said Ogichidaa Kavanaugh. “The Government of Canada entered into this recent agreement without any discussion or engagement with the Anishinaabe Nation of Treaty #3 despite requests from Treaty #3 leadership. We are being kept completely in the dark as Canada reopens our Treaty. This conduct is dishonourable and completely unacceptable.”

-30-

For more information, please contact: Daniel Morriseau, Political Advisor – (807) 464-2647 or by email daniel.morriseau@treaty3.ca