



Algonquins of Ontario

Mattawa/Nipissing Métis Research Report Flawed

Pembroke, Ontario (December 19, 2014) – On December 9, 2014, the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) received a research report on the Métis in the Mattawa/Nipissing region as well as a related press release issued the following day by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO).

This research report is the result of a tripartite research initiative established by the governments of Ontario, Canada and the MNO to determine whether there is a Métis rights-bearing community in the Mattawa/Nipissing region. Financially supported by the government of Ontario and the MNO, it builds on a number of earlier reports that cast doubt on the existence of such a community.

According to the 2003 Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R. v. Powley*, in order for Métis Aboriginal rights to exist, a Métis rights-bearing community must have existed at the time of effective European control of the region in question. Present-day members of the alleged rights-bearing community must also demonstrate ancestral connection to and current membership in that Métis community. Finally, the Métis community has the onus of establishing its Aboriginal rights at the time of effective European control, such as hunting, fishing and trapping.

The government of Ontario has advised the AOO that it is currently reviewing this research report, along with any available previous research, to make a determination. It has not yet made any decision with regards to the existence of a rights-bearing community.

Contrary to the claim of the MNO that the *Powley* test has been satisfied by this research report, the Algonquins of Ontario have serious reservations that the research report establishes the existence of a rights-bearing community in the Mattawa/Nipissing region.

Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel to the AOO, Robert J. Potts stated, “We are going to look closely at this report and all of the supporting material in light of the *Powley* legal criteria. From a legal standpoint we see no indication that the researchers focused on any date that would correspond with the date of effective control. We also believe that they may have applied a very loose definition of community that does not assist in applying the *Powley* case. Finally, the report does not discuss historical harvesting or other activities that could be Aboriginal rights.”

Algonquin Negotiation Representative Clifford Bastien Jr. of the Algonquin community of Mattawa/North Bay added, “The research report relies on Algonquin family lines to establish the existence of a Métis community. The descendants of these supposedly Métis families nearly all self-identify as Algonquin not Métis.”

The AOO will be presenting their analysis of the research report, along with the earlier reports, to the governments of Ontario, Canada and the MNO in the coming months.

A copy of the research report is available at the following link:

<http://www.metisnation.org/media/510492/synthesis%20report%20mattawa%20nipissing%20-%20final.pdf>.