



## Presidents Report

On behalf of the board of directors and myself, I welcome all of you to the first annual general meeting of the MFNAN. Thank you for taking the time to join us today.

As chair of the MFNAN, I wish I could stand in front of you today and say we made significant progress in our fight for "Fair and Equal Treatment". That has not been the case; unfortunately we have been tied up with legal tricks from the Conservative Government at every turn. This has been a very eventful year for the MFNAN and our members, but a year full of disappointments and frustrations.

We launched three Judicial reviews that for all intent and purpose should have been resolved months ago. The Conservative Government and through their legal department have created roadblocks and delays too these judicial reviews from being heard in a timely fashion. At this moment they are currently scheduled to be heard sometime in October here in Newfoundland.

The Conservative Government this year created Bill C-25 to further take away any hope you as applicants have to gain acceptance into the Qalipu Band. This bill was fast tracked through Parliament with minimal debate then turned over to the Senate. The MFNAN sent witnesses to both of these hearings of the senate committee. Anne Hart went to the first meeting to plead our case that the application process was faulty from the inception, and to explain the plight of the aboriginal people of Newfoundland since Confederation. The second hearing was attended by our legal counsel Jamie Lickers to put a more legal slant on this bill, and how it removes our constitutional rights. Both of these appearances were merely for show set up to make it look like they were considering the bill when in fact there was no intention of stopping this bill from passing. Conservative Senators completely ignored our comments. This Bill passed into law June 2014.

With the passing of Bill C-25, the judicial reviews we launched many months ago will do no good even if we win, because this bill allows the Conservative Government to add and remove names from the band list at will, with no recourse.



It removes your right to fight the denial of your application, or to fight if your status is revoked. In effect this bill goes against the constitution of Canada.

This is how the Conservative Government treats its people in Canada, with no regard to "Fair and Equal Treatment"

To launch a legal constitution challenge to this Bill C-25 in court would require money that we do not have, and the Conservative Government knows that.

We have decisions to make today to move our cause forward and it's apparent that a legal challenge would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and would go on for years many years which may not bring any change to the current situation.

We believe and hope the Conservative Government has worn out their welcome and a New Government will be elected in the near future. A Government that will listen to us as a group and be prepared to aid in righting the wrongs and the injustices done to all the Mi'kmaq of Newfoundland. We fully intend to get in front of these new leaders to make them understand these injustices the current Government of Canada have done to our people.

We fully believe that the MFNAN must focus on becoming a Non Status band; much like the FNI did many years ago and continue to fight for recognition. This is something we will discuss with you later in the meeting.

We sincerely hope that our members will continue to support the efforts of the MFNAN as we continue to fight for recognition. There is strength in numbers and we have a large membership that continues to grow.

I have been involved in this from the beginning with the Qalipu Watchdogs through to the creation of the MFNAN and forward to today. I was asked and reluctantly stepped into the role of Interim Chair, then Chair of the MFNAN early in its inception due to a vacancy. I wanted to make sure this group got off the ground and help create something sustainable.



In my spare time away from MFNAN I run my own business, this has provided me with certain skill sets for the operational and financial aspects of running a group like this. It was not my intention frankly to maintain this position as long as I have, because I feel there are better qualified people, with more knowledge of the history of the Mi'Kmaq then me. But I continue to do it because I believe in the MFNAN, and what it can accomplish over time.

In the next few years elections will take place to fill positions on the board as our term expires. Now is the time for you to get involved to ensure we have the people in place to ensure the growth of the MFNAN. I urge all of our members to take an active role, no matter how small, in the MFNAN. With your help we will continue to build on the foundation and ensure that this group will not be ignored in the years to come.

We are always looking for volunteers that can contribute to the day to day business of the MFNAN. There is a lot of work going on in the background with fund raisers, letter campaigns, and just general duties, please don't be afraid to offer your help.

It is our aim to open an office in Corner Brook in the near future and employ one individual to run it. This will provide a single point of contact for the membership and stability to the organization. Once this has been achieved the membership will be notified.

It's been a pleasure working on your behalf and with all of my fellow board members in our first year as the MFNAN. You can be assured that the board of directors currently representing the MFNAN is a strong and determined group of individuals.

Thank you for your continued support!

Don Loder  
Chair