

## **The year 2010 will be known as the "Year of the Métis" in Saskatchewan, Canada.**

The provincial declaration will acknowledge and celebrate the history and accomplishments of the Métis Nation and to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the 1885 Northwest Resistance, according to a provincial press release. Throughout 2010, monthly events will be held across Saskatchewan to highlight aspects of Métis culture and history. The declaration was recently made official during a public ceremony that was held in the Saskatchewan legislature on November 4th, 2009.

### **Year of the Métis Declared**

The legislature's 2nd floor rotunda was filled with more than 100 visitors, numerous dignitaries and Métis dancers. Bill Hutchinson, minister of First Nations and Métis relations, presided over the ceremony and called on Premier Brad Wall to speak before the crowd.

Wall praised the leadership of Métis Nation president Robert Doucette, and referred to the legacy and contributions that Métis people have made to Saskatchewan and Canada.

"Sadly these contributions have gone (...) unheralded by the rest of us. Today we'll take at least a small step in changing that," Wall said. "It is my great pleasure to present the official proclamation announcing 2010 as the Year of the Métis."

At this the crowd burst with excited cheers and a lengthy applause.

The declaration is offered in the spirit of friendship, respect and a commitment to advance the priorities of the Métis Nation, Wall said.

"During the coming year, it's my sincere hope that we can raise awareness of the pivotal role the Métis have played in shaping this province, and the role they are going to play in the future in partnership with government and industry," Wall said.

Métis Cannot Turn Inward, but Must Move Forward Robert Doucette was next to speak. Doucette referred to the Northwest Resistance as a low point for the Métis Nation. He added that the "Year of the Métis" declaration signalled the beginning of an era of reconciliation and interdependence.

"As Métis people, we cannot turn inward, but must move forward with the government and citizens of the province seeking common ground on common problems working together for common solutions," Doucette said.

The rest of Canada and its provinces can learn from this declaration, and should follow Saskatchewan's recognition of the Métis, Doucette said.

In an unguarded moment that elicited warm applause from the audience, Doucette said, "I'm shaking right now, because I'm just a man from Buffalo Narrows that was born in a little white hospital and I never thought I'd be here one day."

The ceremony ended with Métis music, dancing and gifts that Doucette, Wall and Hutchinson exchanged before reporters.

1885 Resistance Only Part of Métis History Doucette later fielded questions from reporters and was asked what "The Year of the Métis" means in relation to Métis' identity and the Northwest Resistance.

There is a fixation on 1885 and the resistance, Doucette said. "What about the rest of the story?" Doucette referred to other Métis leaders like Joseph Dion (Alberta Métis leader from the 30s) and Joe "Z" LaRocque (Saskatchewan Métis leader from the 30s) and other Métis political advancements since 1885.

"God bless Louis Riel, and Gabriel and all of our ancestors for doing what they've done, but now, 2010 will ensure that the rest of the story is told, and for me that's great."

Source:

Credit: Michael Bell Leader of Nation Hails Era of Reconciliation

By Michael Bell November 5th, 2009 - 05:50 pm PT