

HANDOUT



Treaty Land Entitlement Negotiations: Background on the Office of the Treaty Commissioner

In 1989, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Government of Canada created the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) with a mandate to provide recommendations in the areas of Treaty Land Entitlement and Treaty education. Cliff Wright was appointed as the first Commissioner. The OTC continued its work in Treaty Land Entitlement and education until its mandate expired in March 1996.

With the conclusion of the original OTC mandate, the FSIN and Canada seized the opportunity to renew the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. The Honourable

Judge David M. Arnot was appointed Treaty Commissioner for a ten-year period by an Order of the Governor in Council signed by the Governor General of Canada effective January 1, 1997.

After that term was completed the office was continued under the leadership of the Honourable Bill McKnight. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) is an independent body that serves as the primary mechanism to coordinate and facilitate a bilateral process between the Government of Canada and the Federation of

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Saskatchewan Indian Nations to achieve a common understanding on Saskatchewan Treaties (No. 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10).

Position of the OTC

By 1989 both the province and the federal government had rejected the Saskatchewan (1976) Formula and the First Nations had launched a lawsuit to hold governments to the formula. Shortly thereafter the OTC was created by a memorandum of agreement between the then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the FSIN in June of 1989.

By May of 1990 the Treaty Commissioner Cliff Wright presented a “Report and Recommendation on Treaty Land Entitlement” to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and to Chief Roland Crowe of the FSIN. The recommendations in this report provided the basis for the negotiations that resulted in the signing of The Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement in the fall of 1992.