

## The Office of the Treaty Commissioner: Commissioner's Statement

Judge David M. Arnot  
Treaty Commissioner

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner has completed the first phase of exploratory treaty discussions with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Government of Canada. The treaty issues highlighted in the discussions include the history of Treaties Numbered 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 in Saskatchewan, including a discussion on the nature of the treaty relationship. Further, the seven specific treaty issues identified in the work plan for the Office of the Treaty Commissioner were explored and the parties contributed their own fresh perspectives and approaches to the issues. We devoted considerable time identifying future steps that are needed to advance the treaty discussions and treaty implementation in Saskatchewan. The general spirit and overall content of the Parties discussions will be highlighted in the Office of the Treaty Commissioner *Statement of Treaty Issues*, which will be released to the public in May 1998. The *Statement of Treaty Issues* will lay the foundation for future discussions between the parties.

Our work would not have been possible without the continued support and dedication of Treaty First Nations Elders in the province. During the past year, we participated in open forums for dialogue throughout the five treaty areas in Saskatchewan and had the honor of meeting with over 160 elders representing the Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Dene Nations. During our time spent with the elders we witnessed firsthand, the realities of the present situation facing First Nations peoples and developed a better appreciation of our collective history.

We have come to understand that treaties formed the basis of how we relate to one another and will continue to shape our goals in the future. The treaty partnership, which derives from the historical treaties, has evolved and changed over time, and will continue to require renewal and re-adjustment in the future. During the exploratory treaty discussions, the parties reached consensus on a number of issues dealing with treaties, the nature of the treaty relationship, and treaty implementation in Saskatchewan.

Through the exploratory treaty discussions and subsequent Treaty

Elders' Forums, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner facilitated open dialogue between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, First Nations Elders and the Government of Canada. The parties based their discussions upon the principles of mutual respect, understanding and reciprocity. Currently, we have concluded 17 Exploratory Treaty Table meetings.

My staff and I have worked hard to ensure that the Office of the Treaty Commissioner is known for its impartiality and commitment to designing, with its partners, a win-win scenario for future relations between First Nations people and non-Aboriginal peoples. Everyone in Canada and certainly everyone in Saskatchewan has a vested interest in a strengthened treaty partnership.

Anyone interested in the work of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner can contact the Commissioner or his staff at:

Office of the Treaty Commissioner  
1150 – 606 Spadina Crescent East  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
S7K 3H1

Telephone: (306) 244-2100  
Fax: (306) 244-4600  
E-Mail: [otc@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:otc@sk.sympatico.ca)



Plate 1. In May 1997, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) held a Treaty Table meeting at the Nekaneet First Nation. This was a forum for Saskatchewan Elders. From left too right: Senator Gordon Oakes, Elder Hilliard Irmine, Treaty Commissioner Arnot and Senator Jimmy Myo. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

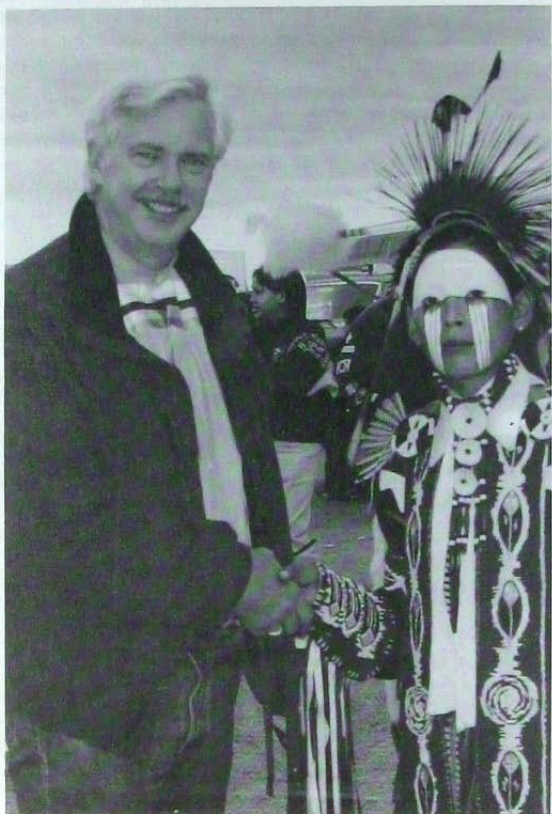


Plate 2. During the summer of 1997, Commissioner Arnot travelled the powwow trail. In August 1997 he attended Beardy's powwow and is pictured here with teen boys' traditional dancer Nicky Cam. Photo: OTC staff.





Plate 3. In August 1997, the OTC hosted meetings at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, just outside Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Pictured here are Commissioner Arnot and Phil Fontaine, recently elected Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Photo: OTC staff.

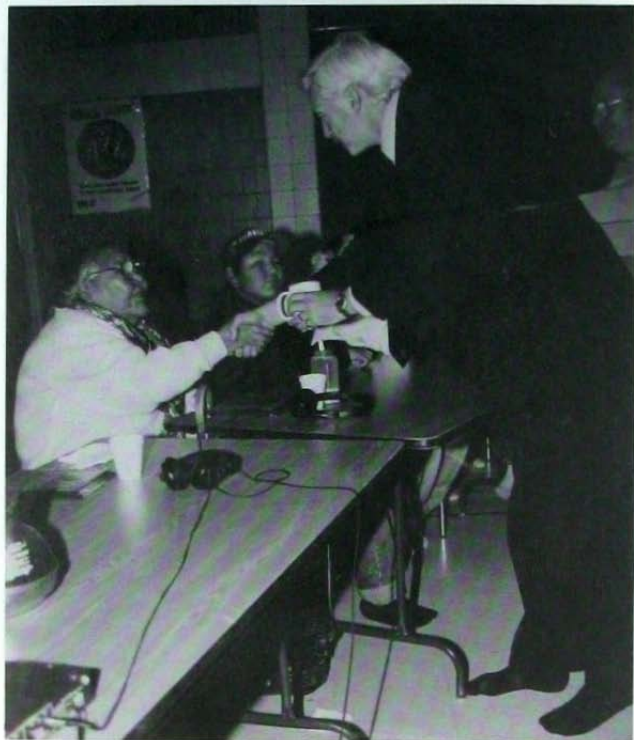


Plate 4. Commissioner Arnot with Elder Celest Randhill at the Treaty 10 forum in Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan. Photo: Darryl Seib.



Plate 5. A Treaty 6 Elders' forum was held at Jackfish Lake, Saskatchewan, 12 to 14 November 1997. Left to right: Commissioner Arnot; David Hawkes, federal negotiator; Albert Angus, policy analyst with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations; and Gerry Greyeyes Swan, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, Saskatchewan government. Photo: Tracey Robinson.



Plate 6. Commissioner Arnot welcomes Chief Blaine Favel, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, at Treaty Awareness Days, hosted by the OTC at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, 21 November 1997. Photo: Gene Hattori, F11 Photographic Design.





Plate 7. Left to right: Saskatchewan Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Bernie Wiens, [federal?] Minister of Indian Affairs Jane Stewart and Commissioner Arnot at Treaty Awareness Days. Photo: Gene Hattori, F11 Photographic Design.



Plate 8. Wiens, Stewart, Favel and Arnot pose with students from local schools at Treaty Awareness Days. Photo: Gene Hattori, F11 Photographic Design.



Photo 9. Commissioner Arnot with Saskatchewan Indian Veterans at Treaty Awareness Days. Photo: Denis Okanee Angus.

