

# “WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE”:

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Self-Determination for the MoCreebec

Report of the Consult '87 Process

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Crees from the East Coast of James Bay have always been present in Ontario and they have a right to part of Ontario. The presence of East Coast Crees in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area is not new. We have always been here. We were here even before legislation or treaties were established.

-Allan Jolly, former Director-Chief of the MoCreebec; in testimony before the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Indian Self-Government; 6 July 1983, in Moose Factory, Ontario.

...the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement extinguished all aboriginal rights within a specified area. As a result, the rights of the . . . MoCreebec of Quebec, who now live in Ontario, were extinguished without their consent although they had not been party to the negotiations. Any aboriginal group claiming rights to land across a provincial or territorial boundary, regardless of its place of residence, should not have its rights altered without its consent. Some aboriginal groups live, and use the land, on both sides of the border. These groups want to negotiate as a group and not to be divided by the borders of others.

- Living Treaties, Lasting Agreements; Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy. M. Coolican, Chair. Ottawa: DIAND, December 1985.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES

In 1971, the Quebec government began to construct a monumental hydroelectric project in the northern James Bay region, involving the diversion of several major rivers and the flooding of immense tracts of land. In 1973 the Cree and Inuit of northern Quebec instituted a court action against the Government of Quebec requesting a permanent injunction against the James Bay hydroelectric project. They claimed that the land on which it was being constructed belonged to the aboriginal people of the area, and therefore that Quebec was not free to develop it without their consent.

The northern land in question had been transferred by the federal government to Quebec under the 1912 Boundary Extension Act, on the condition that the province obtain formal surrender (in European terms) of Native interests in the area prior to its development. After the courts ruled that Quebec was indeed obligated to obtain the consent of Native people before proceeding with James Bay hydroelectric project; Quebec, Canada and the aboriginal peoples of northern Quebec embarked on two years of highly-visible and highly-pressurised negotiations. The resulting land claim agreement – the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement – was signed in 1975 between the governments of Canada and Quebec, three provincial crown corporations, and the Quebec Cree and Inuit. Briefly, in exchange for the surrender of Native “claims, rights, titles and interests” to the 640 000 km<sup>2</sup> Agreement territories, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement provides the Cree (and Inuit) communities of the region with compensation monies and a variety of benefits and rights. (In 1978, a supplementary agreement for the Naskapi band of northeastern Quebec was signed). In 1984, the federal Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act established a form of community self-government for Crees and Naskapi of northern Quebec.

At the time the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) was signed in 1975, there existed in Moose Factory and Moosonee, Ontario, a well-established community of Cree people whose origins were in Quebec. However, this community was not recognized by or incorporated under the 1975 JBNQA. This community of people organized politically as the MoCreebec ('Moose Factory Cree of Quebec'); and is self-defined to include those Cree people in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area who are, or are descended from, the Quebec Cree of James Bay who are signatories of the 1975 James Bay Agreement, members and descendants of the eight Quebec Cree communities are entitled to be enrolled as Agreement beneficiaries. Accordingly, the majority of MoCreebec members are listed as JBNQA beneficiaries by virtue of their membership on northern Quebec band lists.

The split between MoCreebec members' province of origin, Quebec, and current residence in Ontario has had serious and far-reaching consequences for MoCreebec community members. In neither Ontario nor Quebec is the status of the MoCreebec certain. While MoCreebec people's rights as aboriginal people from Quebec have been recognized through the JBNQA, these rights are tied to territory in Quebec; therefore, the MoCreebec community neither holds nor exercises collective JBNQA rights. Unlike their Quebec kin under the JBNQA, the MoCreebec community as a whole receives no educational benefits, no core support for its political organization, no compensation from the JBNQA, no economic development assistance, nor any of the variety of special benefits and rights flowing to aboriginal individuals and communities under the JBNQA. Neither do they benefit from collective treaty protection and rights in Ontario (as do their Treaty no. 9 neighbours and kin), or officially-recognized community status in Ontario. Because their rights are attached to land on which they are not resident, the MoCreebec

are, in essence, treated as non-status, off-reserve Indians who are not beneficiaries of the JBNQA or, generally speaking, of Treaty No. 9.

The history of the MoCreebec people does not begin with the signing of the JBNQA in 1975: it stretches back to the time before the arrival of Europeans, when James Bay was one geographical, cultural, economic and political unit. When non-aboriginal peoples first began to occupy the James Bay region (then called Rupert's Land), during the Hudson's Bay Company fur-trading period, there were three main trade posts at the "bottom of the Bay": Rupert's House (now called Waskaganish and incorporated as a Cree community under the JBNQA), the Hannah Bay Post (destroyed in 1832) and Moose Factory Island, established as a post in 1673. These three posts were linked by ties of trade, by their religious missions which served both sides of the Bay. The historical predominance of Moose Factory Island as the James Bay fur trade and, later, government and business centre has drawn James Bay Cree people to the community for hundreds of years.

In the 1850s, the first missionary arrived in the Bay and settled on Moose Factory, Island. This Methodist Mission served both sides of the Bay, as did the Anglican Mission which soon followed it. In 1872, Rupert's land was ceded to Canada, and the cohesive James Bay Region was administratively split for the first time. The East Coast of James Bay was annexed to Quebec, while the West Coast was added to Ontario. Next, in 1905, two major events shaping the future of the James Bay Region occurred; First, the tripartite Treaty No. 9 was signed to cover the Ontario portion of James Bay. However, there was no parallel attempt to recognize the aboriginal rights of those people living on the East Coast of James Bay (now part of Quebec). Secondly, the Revillon Freres fur trade company began operations in the James Bay area in 1905. The presence of the Revillon Freres company dramatically increased competition for the



furs. As a result, the formerly elaborate Hudson's Bay Company posts in the Bay – which included farms and blacksmith shops – were streamlined down to the bare necessities. The heightened trade competition also led to a well-documented collapse in the eastern James Bay beaver population in the late 1920s. Both the scarcity of beaver created an exodus of post employees from the East Coast of James Bay. Many people from the Quebec side of James Bay settled just over the Quebec border, in Moose Factory, Ontario; as this was the only post on the Bay that still had work.

Despite their administrative split of the James Bay region into Ontario and Quebec portions, the federal government did not put the division into practise by splitting their activities along the Ontario-Quebec border. Federal services for both sides of James Bay were administered from Moosonee and Moose Factory from mid-1930s to the late 1960s. In particular, the Department of Indian Affairs administered to the East and West Coasts of James Bay as one unit until 1962.

The longstanding predominance of Moose Factory Island in the James Bay region was further enhanced in the early 1930s with the completion of the Ontario Northlands railway to Moosonee. Aboriginal people from Quebec took advantage of employment opportunities created by and related to the railway. In the same year, a beaver preserve was created in Rupert's House, which, by restricting beaver trapping, in some measure contributed to Cree people leaving the Rupert's House area.

By 1950, James Bay regional health and educational facilities had been built in Moose Factory. The need for education in addition to a tuberculosis epidemic in the 1940s and 50s brought East Coast people to Moose Factory and Moosonee for health care and educational services. Families of children in the Moose Factory hospital often came to live on Moose Factory Island. The

prospect of working in government facilities was also an incentive for people from other Bay posts to move to the Moosonee-Moose Factory area.

However, it was not only jobs, education and health care that drew Cree people from the East Coast of James Bay to the Moosonee-Moose Factory area: A joint Ontario government (Ministry of Lands and Forests, now the Ministry of Natural Resources) and Department of Indian Affairs fur management program in the 1950s and 60s encouraged and employed East Coast trappers to harvest furs in remote and untrapped areas of Ontario. Quebec aboriginal people came to trap in Ontario and played a key role in the management of Ontario fur resources and trapline areas.

Finally, those Quebec Crees attracted to the Moosonee-Moose Factory area because of social and economic factors served to supplement the numbers of people whose familial and historical ties were in Quebec, and yet who had always lived in Ontario. This group either had traplines located wholly in Ontario or which straddled the Ontario-Quebec border and were more readily accessible from Moose Factory.

Accordingly, by the time James Bay and Northern Quebec negotiations began in 1972, 'Quebec Cree people' had long been living in Ontario. When the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed in 1975, there was a well-established community of people in Moose Factory and Moosonee, Ontario, with strong ties to Quebec Crees and fewer or no ties to Ontario aboriginal people.<sup>1</sup> Although this community (now known as MoCreebec) was not organized politically at the time, its members were not entirely left out the JBNQA negotiating process. In 1975, representatives of the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec), the political body established to represent and advance the interests of the Cree people affected by the proposed

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<sup>1</sup> Until 1975, the Moose Factory First Nation (located on Moose Factory Island) accepted individual transfers from Quebec bands, thus the Moose Factory First Nation also contains individuals with Quebec Cree origins.

northern Quebec hydroelectric development, visited the Moosonee-Moose Factory area.

However, the MoCreebec community was not adequately organized at the time to receive and disseminate information. The MoCreebec community was also not accepted as a participant in the JBNQA negotiations.

By the late 1970s, in the absence of federal, Quebec (under the JBNQA) or Ontario government recognition and support, the MoCreebec community was in crisis. Without official band status, a reserve or incorporation under the JBNQA, federal government services were largely unavailable to the MoCreebec people, while provincial services were also minimal. Many MoCreebec people were living on Moose Factory Island in “Tent City,” a small gathering of crowded canvas and plywood shelters. These homes had no servicing and consequently their occupants suffered disease levels which reached epidemic proportions. Furthermore, the MoCreebec were officially classified as “squatters,” as the land on which Tent City was situated belonged to the Anglican Church.

Primarily in response to their immediate housing, health and social concerns, the Moosonee and Moose Factory JBNQA beneficiaries and the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) formed a political organization in which they called ‘MoCreebec’ in February 1980. The MoCreebec organization established a non-profit housing corporation, negotiated the purchase of twenty-seven acres from the Anglican Church, and began to build houses on serviced lots. The MoCreebec organization currently lobbies for support for MoCreebec students, to help MoCreebec trappers access support and to operate cable television. The immediate aim of the MoCreebec organization is to develop community economic enterprises. The long-term goals of the MoCreebec political organization are: to gain government recognition for the MoCreebec community as a distinct aboriginal group, to have the collective land rights of the MoCreebec

recognized, to establish a collective land base for the MoCreebec, and to establish community self-government for the MoCreebec people. The MoCreebec organization and its members believe MoCreebec can reach its goals primarily through the establishment of a MoCreebec landbase, possibly as an incorporated band under the JBNQA.

Since 1985, the MoCreebec have been the subject of two federal reviews (the Denault Report, released in April of 1985; followed by the Price Report of 1986); and their situation has been recognized and documented in numerous other sources, including a federal (Department of Indian Affairs) Task Force review of the Comprehensive Land Claims process.<sup>2</sup> However, the status – unrecognized, uncertain and precarious – of the MoCreebec community remains essentially unchanged since 1975. This document presents the results of a comprehensive survey of MoCreebec members and thus represents a step towards clarifying MoCreebec’s status and achieving its goals.

Finally, as the MoCreebec people are not officially recognized as an aboriginal community by the federal and provincial communities, membership in the MoCreebec community is not externally recorded or regulated. The bulk of the members of the MoCreebec community are named on Quebec band lists as beneficiaries of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. However, MoCreebec members who hold membership in bands outside Quebec (such as the Moose Factory First Nation in Ontario), and do not appear on Quebec band lists, may equally be considered part of the MoCreebec community. The MoCreebec membership is currently estimated at approximately 1000 members.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy, Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements. M. Coolican, Chair. Ottawa: DIAND, December 1985.

## The Consult Process and document

Over a period of several years, the MoCreebec organization negotiated with the federal Department of Indian Affairs for funds to carry out a comprehensive study of the MoCreebec community. The Consult '87 project which emerged, while more modest than originally anticipated, included the administration of a questionnaire to MoCreebec members and a day-long workshop attended by 100 people.

Prior to administering the questionnaire and conducting the workshop, a leaflet (Appendix 1) explaining both the issues confronting the MoCreebec community and the purpose of the Consult process was distributed to all the people in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area who could potentially self-identify as members of the MoCreebec community. The leaflet states that “our Consult will gather and share information with our Members to better plan for our collective future needs.”

A detailed questionnaire (Appendix 2) was administered to 122 respondents, which in 1987 represented 27% of the MoCreebec members over the age of 17 and named on Quebec band lists.<sup>3</sup> The survey sample reflected quite accurately the MoCreebec population as a whole, although the age group from 41 – 54 years was slightly over-represented, as were males.

A team of three interviewers administered the questionnaire in Cree or English, as appropriate.

The questionnaire consisted of 183 questions, and usually took one to two hours to complete.

The questionnaire was very open-ended, with frequent opportunities for respondents to provide additional comments. There were several problems with the questionnaire: it was long, and the

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<sup>3</sup> In 1987, it was impossible to identify MoCreebec members not named on Quebec band lists (i.e., those listed on band lists for bands outside of Quebec or on no band lists). Accordingly, Quebec band lists were used to generate a population base for the Consult survey.

wording of some questions was confusing (particularly those questions gathering household data). Nevertheless, the internal consistency of the Consult findings indicate that the data collected are reliable.

In contrast to the questionnaire, the day-long workshop focused more specifically on: the ramifications for the MoCreebec community of their exclusion from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement; the problem of maintaining the MoCreebec Cree culture and language; and the possibility of establishing a MoCreebec landbase. The workshop included an opening plenary session, followed by three small discussion groups (two English, one Cree) to discuss obstacles, a general session to share these discussions of obstacles to progress, small group discussions of proposed solutions, and a closing plenary focusing on the future.

This document integrates the Consult '87 workshop and questionnaire results. It is the most comprehensive summary available of the current living conditions of the MoCreebec (including statistical data on family size, employment, education, use of the Cree language, etc.); the degree to which the MoCreebec community practises or shows an interest in practising traditional pursuits (including trapping, hunting, fishing and gathering as well as skills such as net- and snowshoe-making); community members' knowledge of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Indian Act, and the MoCreebec organization and its goals; community members' opinions on the question of a landbase for the MoCreebec people, their understanding of the concept of self-government and their opinion of the need for some form of self-government for the MoCreebec; a detailed examination of their connection to the Quebec bands covered by the JBNQA; and finally a list of 56 recommendations related to all of the above topics.

Although the original goals of the Consult '87 process were modified due to financial constraints and slight problems with data collection, the process has created an invaluable information base

from which community planning and development may proceed. The high participation rate of MoCreebec members in the Consult process indicates that the MoCreebec people are both aware of their collective plight and are intent upon participating in gaining control over their future. The Consult process and this document represent further steps toward the goals of achieving self-government and a landbase for the MoCreebec community.

Throughout this document, the participants in the Consult process will be referred to as “the MoCreebec”. As already stated, there is no official definition of MoCreebec membership, and thus no clear-cut method of establishing who is a member of the MoCreebec community. Progress is now underway to develop a membership code and an official declaration of membership for the MoCreebec people.

## The James Bay Agreement Connection

### i. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (questions 57-69)

Chapter 3 of the JBNQA sets out the conditions for beneficiary eligibility. As Cree people with origins in Quebec, the MoCreebec are indisputably entitled to be registered as JBNQA beneficiaries. Accordingly, the majority of people who self-identify as MoCreebec members are listed on JBNQA band beneficiary lists.

Section 3 also includes a clause – Section 3.2.7 – which purports to limit the rights of members located outside the Agreement territory (northern Quebec). This section states

in the event a [beneficiary or person eligible for beneficiary status] is absent from the Territory during ten continuous years and is domiciled outside the Territory, such person shall not be entitled to exercise his rights or receive benefits under the Agreement. Upon such person re-establishing his domicile in the Territory, the right of such person to exercise his rights or to receive benefits under the Agreement shall revive.

However, the implications of this section for the MoCreebec are not clear, and no definite explanation as to what this section says about the MoCreebec has been provided. Consequently, there is now considerable uncertainty as to when the ten-year loss of rights clause (s.3.2.7 of the JBNQA) goes into effect for individual beneficiaries. The process and requirements to reinstate those rights is also uncertain. Generally, section 3.2.7 of the Agreement appears to have been



included for beneficiaries who temporarily leave Quebec, not for those who permanently occupy a homeland outside the provincial boundary.

As already discussed, the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) visited the Moosonee-Moose Factory area in 1975 to discuss the JBNQA and its implications for ‘Quebec Crees’ in Ontario. Despite this visit, the MoCreebec community was not incorporated as an aboriginal community under the JBNQA, and substantial numbers of Quebec Cree who are beneficiaries of the JBNQA remained in Ontario. The responses gathered by the Consult questionnaire indicate clearly that at the time of the Grand Council of the Crees’ (GCC) visit, MoCreebec members were not sufficiently organized to receive representations on the JBNQA; and the visit did not provide the MoCreebec community with enough information to become organized. The result was that the MoCreebec were not adequately informed – by the Grand Council of the Crees, the federal government or the Quebec government – about the proposed Hydro Quebec hydroelectric development, the processes of political and legal action in Quebec, or the final settlement and its implications for this community of Quebec Cree not resident in Quebec.

Fully 40% of MoCreebec surveyed state they have no recollection of the Grand Council of Crees’ trip to Moose Factory, and a further 46% did not answer the question, leaving only 14% who actually remember the visit. Consult participants who remember the trip indicate it was mismanaged. When asked which representatives of the GCC visited Moose Factory, the most frequently mentioned names were Billy Diamond, Philip Awashish, Walter Hughboy and Charles Bobbish. Because so few people recall the visit at all, the most frequent response to specific questions was “no response.” For example, 86% of respondents hazarded no guess on the number of GCC representative on that trip. Only 8% indicated that they were informed about the JBNQA by the activities of the GCC, generally through the public meeting held on Moose

Factory Island. Tellingly, more persons suggested that the representatives did not talk at all than commented on the length of the speech.

Most of the MoCreebec surveyed in 1987 indicated they learned about the JBNQA not primarily from the 1975 GCC visit, but through personal contacts in Ontario (21%), through the media (21%), or from the MoCreebec organization (16%). Eighty-five percent of MoCreebec members knew nothing about the Agreement before it was signed, and 91% say today they still know little or nothing about the Agreement. However, 11% are aware of the existence of the problematic ten-year loss of rights clause (s.3.2.7.). Ninety percent of those surveyed indicated they want more information on all of the above issues.

#### ii. The MoCreebec Organization (questions 70-81)

Without official government recognition, such as incorporation under the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act or band status and a reserve under the Indian Act, the MoCreebec community does not have the status and resources – most notably, a landbase – enjoyed by their kin under the JBNQA and their neighbours and kin under the Indian Act in Ontario. Many recent studies<sup>4</sup> and government reports<sup>5</sup> have demonstrated that the legal identities of aboriginal communities are often defined externally and arbitrarily. However, responses gathered to the Consult process

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<sup>4</sup> See particularly Shin Imai and Katherine Laird, “The Indian Status Question: A Problem of Definitions,” Canadian Legal Aid Bulletin: Native People and Justice in Canada. Special Issue, Part 1. 5/1 (January 1982): 113-123; Paul Driben, Aroland is Our Home: An Incomplete Victory in Applied Anthropology, AMS Press: New York, 1986; and John S. Long, “Treaty No. 9 and fur trade company families: Northeastern Ontario’s halfbreeds, Indians, petitioners and metis,” in The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America, ed. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown, 137-162. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985.

<sup>5</sup> The Royal Commission on the Northern Environment. Final Report and Recommendations. J.E.J. Fahlgren, Commissioner. Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, June 1985; 4-10; and Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy. Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements. M. Coolican, Chair. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, December 1985: 51-52.

demonstrate that the MoCreebec have created a positive community identity for themselves in the absence of external recognition.

Primarily, the members of the MoCreebec community appear to be both stable and aware of their collective plight. When MoCreebec members were asked if they identify with the MoCreebec people as “their people”, 87% replied yes, although formal affiliation (i.e., band membership) may be with other groups. Only 3% of MoCreebec members surveyed have been in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area for less than a decade.

Almost all (93%) persons surveyed agreed that an organization representing the beneficiaries of the JBNQA is needed in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area. The MoCreebec organization is accepted as the legitimate representative of the MoCreebec community by 92% of respondents, although only 53% were familiar with it prior to the questionnaire and workshop. (Those unfamiliar with the MoCreebec organization requested more information.)

Despite responses indicating a lack of familiarity with the MoCreebec organization and its objectives, 79% of MoCreebec members surveyed indicated they support the work and direction of the MoCreebec organization. The most frequent criticisms of the organization were the lack of information about its activities and a sense that MoCreebec residents of Moosonee (as opposed to Moose Factory Island) were ignored.

Eighty-six percent of MoCreebec surveyed have never held public office (such as a seat on the MoCreebec council or another band council). Sixty-eight percent suggested they would be interested in taking a more active role in the MoCreebec organization. However, relatively few people attend MoCreebec functions, with 40% going to general meetings and special events, and 9% to council meetings. Suggestions for expanding participation in MoCreebec meetings in

Moosonee, and appointing or electing designated Moosonee resident representatives. Seventy-two percent of respondents supported the suggestion that the organization be structured to reflect traditional family clans.

While members of the MoCreebec community indicate through their responses to the Consult questionnaire and workshop that they are eager to become more active and involved in their political organization, translating this enthusiasm into action will require hard work and effective organization. The impressive participation in the questionnaire and turnout at the workshop, contrasted with the lack of participation in general organizational activities, suggests that the MoCreebec organization could increase interest and participation in its activities through more active organization-building efforts (distributing leaflets, producing radio programs, organizing door-to-door, and establishing more and more active committees). Given the importance, gravity and potential divisiveness of the issues facing the MoCreebec people and their organization – building a new community, possible court action, working to provide acceptable housing for MoCreebec people, the struggle to regain and practice MoCreebec aboriginal rights – the MoCreebec organization will need the strong, active and informed support of its membership. This crucial need, in turn, suggests that the comprehensive plan which the MoCreebec organization feels is necessary for establishing a new MoCreebec community be developed in a highly participatory fashion.

#### [ii. The Indian Act \(questions 153-173\)](#)

The MoCreebec community members indicated through their responses to the Consult questionnaire that they feel some ambivalence on the question of negotiating their formal status. Most MoCreebec members surveyed indicated they would be willing to sever their ties with their Quebec bands of origin to affiliate with a MoCreebec band: people commented that they “feel

attached” to MoCreebec. However, over half of those surveyed (53%) also indicated they are not willing to surrender their rights and benefits under the JBNQA for band status and a reserve under the Indian Act. The most common reason cited for this unwillingness to surrender JBNQA rights and benefits was the greater flexibility and freedom for communities under the JBNQA and the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act.

In the workshop, participants’ contributions showed clearly that they are unwilling to make a decision on the issue of band affiliation until the rights, responsibilities and services attached to a new community (with landbase) are more widely known. However, it was suggested that the MoCreebec might consider exchanging their JBNQA rights for a package of negotiated rights in Ontario, plus to formal Indian Act recognition as an Aboriginal community.

However, 71% of the MoCreebec members surveyed indicated they lacked sufficient knowledge of the Indian Act to comment on the desirability of forming a band under the Indian Act. Most MoCreebec members surveyed also indicated they lack information on the roles of Most MoCreebec members surveyed also indicated they lack information on the roles of Indian Act Chiefs and Band Councils. Opinion was fairly evenly divided on the desirability of two-versus four-year terms for the Chief and Council. Most people surveyed indicated they would like more information on band government under the Indian Act in order to make these decisions.

### iii. The Question of MoCreebec Landbase (questions 154-167)

Eighty-four percent of MoCreebec surveyed believe a landbase is important, and fully 91% cited they believe the MoCreebec people have aboriginal, treaty (JBNQA) and occupancy rights to a landbase. The most commonly provided reasons for the need for a MoCreebec landbase are: to give the MoCreebec a common sense of belonging (16% of reasons given), to provide for the

needs of future generations (12%) and to gain some form of self-government (11%). Workshop participants saw obtaining a landbase as fundamental to cultural survival and to the retention and regrowth of the East Cree/MoCreebec language and lifestyle. Seventy-seven percent of MoCreebec members surveyed feel that the MoCreebec should also have harvesting (hunting, trapping, gathering and fishing) rights on lands additional to a landbase where MoCreebec have exclusive harvesting rights.

Seventy-four percent of MoCreebec members surveyed would be willing to move to a new community on a landbase, with half suggesting they would be willing to move in less than five years. Eighty-eight percent indicated they would prefer individual land and home ownership as the practice on the landbase, as opposed to Indian Act-style collective land ownership.

One-third of MoCreebec members surveyed have thought about possible locations for a MoCreebec landbase. These people indicated that important factors to consider when selecting a landbase would be its accessibility (25% of responses), its access to renewable resources (11%), and the need for good soil conditions (11%). Workshop participants emphasized both the need for employment opportunities at the new site and concern about the servicing available.

Most (88%) of MoCreebec members surveyed felt that Moose Factory Island would be more appropriate than the mainland for a landbase. However, 36% stated that the landbase could be located in the Moosonee area, with a further 13% specifying south of Moosonee and 13% suggesting Hannah Bay. MoCreebec members are not firmly attached to a specific location, as 75% indicated they would accept a majority decision on a landbase site.

The location of the landbase was thoroughly discussed in the workshop, with sites at Hannah Bay, Moose Factory and Moosonee assessed in some detail by participants. No site was the

undisputed choice of workshop participants: the Hannah Bay site was seen as difficult to service, lacking transportation and accessibility, already used by hunters, and may not provide many employment opportunities. Moose Factory Island is perceived as too small, has transportation difficulties, is already settled, and some MoCreebec members do not want to move there. A new site in Moosonee would meet some of the criteria desired by participants: it would be accessible, easily serviced, and would provide job opportunities. However, people of Moose Factory Island are not enthusiastic about moving to the mainland. Other sites such as south of Moosonee, near French River reserve, Cochrane and Kwatab were mentioned in the workshop and the questionnaire.

Responses to the questionnaire and participants in the workshop indicated there was clearly sufficient enthusiasm and support for the MoCreebec organization to continue its work toward gaining a landbase for MoCreebec people. However, until their questions and concerns about what establishing and moving to a MoCreebec landbase might mean for the MoCreebec are answered – possibly through a landbase feasibility study – the MoCreebec people will be unable to firmly choose a site for their landbase.

A number of strategies and suggestions for action were made at the workshop. To achieve the twin goals of self-government and a landbase, it was felt that the MoCreebec people must be able to work together as a unified group: a step towards this unity might be a publicly-ratified declaration of the rights of the MoCreebec and public support for the MoCreebec to begin negotiations for a landbase. Since problems are anticipated with both non-aboriginal and aboriginal governments, Consult participants suggested that the MoCreebec organization being actively solicit support from affected aboriginal communities, national aboriginal organizations,

and other non-Native groups. Negotiations, anticipated to be lengthy, should also begin with both the provincial and federal governments.

There are many obstacles, with origins both local and external to Moose Factory, to gaining a landbase for the MoCreebec community. Federal and provincial government support is not assured. The consent and support of the bands with whom MoCreebec members are now officially affiliated and other affected aboriginal groups have not been gained. The cost of a new, serviced community would be quite high. For MoCreebec community members, the choice of a site will not come easily or quickly. Once a site is chosen, many MoCreebec members may not want to move from their present locations because they own homes in Moosonee or Moose Factory, because of jobs and job opportunities, or because of services already available in their existing locality. Local politics and family conflicts could also influence the establishment of a new community.

As political lobbying and negotiations get underway, the MoCreebec organization should also undertake feasibility studies on possible sites and begin a comprehensive planning exercise to prepare community capital, services and economic development plans. These plans could both guide the current activities of the MoCreebec community and organization and act as a blueprint for a future community. Given the low level of usual participation on the part of MoCreebec community members and the high stated desire for involvement, all studies should be carried out as community exercise. Once planning and feasibility studies are completed, the MoCreebec membership should have the opportunity to vote on site selection.



## The MoCreebec People: (questions 1-9, 42)

### i. The people today. . .

The MoCreebec population is young: more than 60% of the adult population is under the age of 40 and only 7% is over the age of 65. This age distribution, similar for both males and females, is consistent with the 1980 Indian population predictions of Indian Conditions: A Survey<sup>6</sup>, but represents a younger population than that of Canada as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Approximately 30% of the MoCreebec population is under the age of 15.<sup>8</sup> Seven percent of the population is over the age of 65. Thus the population is demographically young: this means, among other things, that there is a heavy economic burden on the adults.

The MoCreebec population also contains a high proportion of men. This is likely due to the historic Indian Act pattern of women taking on their husband's band affiliation. Seventy-nine percent of MoCreebec surveyed indicated in 1987 that they were status Indians. This percentage may now have increased due to the effects of the 1985 amendments to the Indian Act by Bill C-31.

Over half of the MoCreebec individuals surveyed live with a partner: 45% are married with a further 9% are in common-law relationships. The incidence of separation and divorce appears to be quite low. These partnership patterns are generally similar for both men and women surveyed, with slightly more women in relationships than men. There appears to be a low

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<sup>6</sup> See Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Indian Conditions: A Survey. DIAND: Ottawa, 1980.

<sup>7</sup> The 1986 national census shows approximately 64% of the Canadian population as a whole is under the age of 40, but 11% is above the age of 60. See Statistics Canada, Current Demographic Analysis, "New Trends in the Family: Demographic Facts and Figures." Ottawa: Statistics Canada, March 1990.

<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the 1986 census shows only approximately 21% of Canadians are under the age of 15.

incidence of female-headed households; which may reflect the high incidence in the MoCreebec community of single households crowded with several families.

More than half of the MoCreebec population – 70% of the women and 50% of the men surveyed – have dependents. The average household size is between 5 and 6 persons. (In comparison, the average Canadian household is slightly under 3 persons.<sup>9</sup>) Younger members of the MoCreebec households surveyed live in larger households than adults: the median household size for MoCreebec members under 18 was 7, while for those over 18 it was 6.

## ii. . . . and their origins

The Consult process shows that the members of the MoCreebec community are affiliated with the Eastern James Bay communities located in what is now Quebec. However, it is equally clear that they have lived in Ontario for many years. The Moosonee-Moose Factory area is the birthplace for 51% of MoCreebec surveyed; while 47% were born in the Eastern James Bay coastal communities of Waskaganish, Eastmain and Wemindji. While half of the MoCreebec are resident in their birthplace; when asked to indicate band or community affiliation, 72% indicated an affiliation with these three East Coast communities (see Table 1).

Although most MoCreebec members are officially affiliated with JBNQA bands (i.e., listed on band beneficiary lists), their relationship with those communities is neither strong nor recent; and 86% now consider the Moosonee-Moose Factory area their home. While 66% of MoCreebec members have lived in Quebec, most did so over twenty years ago. Only 4% of community members surveyed own a home in Quebec. Twenty-three percent have worked in Quebec.

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<sup>9</sup> The 1986 census shows the average Canadian household to be 2.8 persons, and the average family to be 3.1 persons.

Most MoCreebec members travel to Quebec occasionally, primarily to visit friends and relatives. Most (73%) have visited Quebec in the past decade. However, only 35% would consider moving to Quebec and only 6% mentioned that they considered their homeland to be in Quebec. MoCreebec members do not hunt, fish or trap in Quebec.

Respondents noted an even stronger connection with East Coast communities for their parents, as indicated both by parents' birthplace (see Table 2) and parents' band affiliation (see Table 3). 57% of the fathers and 66% of the mothers of MoCreebec members surveyed were born in the communities of Waskaganish, Eastmain and Wemindji, while a further 5% and 7% respectively were born in other JBNQA James Bay communities. MoCreebec members state that 59% of their fathers and 66% of their mothers were affiliated with these three East Coast communities, with an additional 6% of both fathers and mothers affiliated with other Quebec aboriginal communities. Only 15% of fathers and 13% of mothers were born in the western (Ontario) James Bay coastal communities; and 11% of fathers and 13% of mothers are or were affiliated with West Coast communities.

Table 1. Birthplace and Current Band Affiliation of Questionnaire Respondents

(figures expressed in rounded percentages)

	Moosonee-Moose Factory	Waskaganish-Eastmain- Wemindji
Birthplace	51%	47%
Band Affiliation		72%

Table 2. MoCreebec Parents' Birthplaces

(figures expressed in rounded percentages)

	Waskaganish- Eastmain- Wemindji	Other JBNQA communities	Total in Quebec	Ontario's James Bay Coast
Fathers	57%	5%	62%	15%
Mothers	66%	7%	73%	13%

Table 3. MoCreebec Parents' Band Affiliation

(figures expressed in rounded percentages)

	Waskaganish- Eastmain- Wemindji	Other JBNQA communities	Total in Quebec	Ontario's James Bay Coast
Fathers	59%	6%	64%	11%
Mothers	66%	6%	72%	13%

## MOCREEBEC SELF-GOVERNMENT

### i. The Meaning of Self-Government for the MoCreebec (questions 174-184)

Slightly over half (54%) of MoCreebec members surveyed indicated that they understand the concept of aboriginal self-government. Consult participants' definitions of self-government tended to revolve around aboriginal rights, particularly the right to self-determination (defined by participants as the ability for a community to make its own decisions, gain control over its own affairs, and manage its own programs). Eighty-nine percent of members surveyed believe that the MoCreebec people have a right to self-government, and that some form of self-government would be a positive development for the MoCreebec community. Consult participants would support an initiative to gain officially-recognized self-government, such as the community governing structures and powers available under the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act. Workshop participants suggested that MoCreebec develop its own membership code, which was seen as an initial step in developing self-government for the MoCreebec. MoCreebec members' relations to Quebec bands would need to be resolved concomitant with the development of a membership code.

Most (63%) of MoCreebec surveyed do not understand the issue of land claims, but would like more information. Despite their lack of information and comprehension, most respondents (76%) indicated they would support the MoCreebec organisation in pursuing a land claim to enhance self-government for their members.

As part of the Consult process, MoCreebec members were asked detailed questions on their opinions about local service delivery agencies, as if the MoCreebec community is to gain some form of self-government; that new community government structure will consist, in part, of the

administration of these services to MoCreebec members by MoCreebec members. Members were also asked questions about their education and job skills, current employment, income and expenditures, housing and use of health services, to collect data required to assess their needs and skills for self-governance. This information follows.

ii. [Education and Skills Training \(questions 12, 15, 16, 19\)](#)

Over 50% of the MoCreebec members surveyed do not have a high school certificate. Seventeen percent have not completed elementary school. Twenty percent have attended post-secondary institutions. Younger members have higher achievement levels in the formal education system than older persons, and women tend to leave school at earlier ages and more frequently than men.

Education is important to the MoCreebec community, as it is to other communities, and one barrier to overcome in the construction of a new community will be ensuring access to suitable educational services. People will be understandably reluctant to move to a MoCreebec landbase unless they are assured that education for their children will be available, including transportation for high school students. Since educational services will be a major factor in the choice of a landbase for the MoCreebec, it is recommended that comprehensive planning regarding education be undertaken immediately.

Fully 38% of the MoCreebec surveyed reported they had no formal skills or training. Those skills respondents possessed were clustered in the service sector, which is unsurprising given the importance of the Moosonee-Moose Factory community as a service centre.

While the majority (62%) of the MoCreebec reported they hold no formal skills and training, only 40% have been able to find employment in their area of expertise. This finding suggests that

the Moosonee-Moose Factory area had a small, limited job market and that there is an insufficient emphasis on employability and placement services in the Moosonee-Moose Factory region. Sixty-three percent of MoCreebec surveyed feel their skills need to be improved; however, the present poor fit between skills held by MoCreebec members and employment available locally must be considered when planning any type of skill training for the MoCreebec community.

iii. Employment (questions 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23)

In total, 43% of the MoCreebec members surveyed were not working at the time of the questionnaire, and approximately one third of the MoCreebec members surveyed consider themselves unemployed. Ten percent were attending school, while 16% were either retired or not in the formal job market (i.e., employed in the home). Men have a higher unemployment rate (38% of men were unemployed) than women (18%). Young and middle-aged men report the highest rates of unemployment (60% of young men and 50% of middle-aged men report they are unemployed). Seventy-five percent of those not working indicated they were available for work.

Of those MoCreebec members surveyed who work outside the home, slightly over half (53%) hold full-time jobs, while 30% work part-time. The majority of those with jobs work in government sectors such as public administration, health, education and social services. Generally speaking, these are not professional-level jobs; as only 22% of those surveyed considered themselves professionals.

Forty-four percent of MoCreebec have never held a full-time job outside the home. Respondents attributed this finding to a wide range of reasons including being occupied full-time in the home to a lack of opportunities to work outside the home. There are very few (only 8%) MoCreebec

who hold more than one job. Fewer than 30% of respondents expressed an interest in working for themselves. Reasons given for preferring waged employment varied from the desire to hold steady work to a lack of confidence in the respondent's ability to be self-employed.

Only 24% of MoCreebec experiences a conflict between formal employment and traditional activities. More men (30%) notes this conflict than women (16%)

#### iv. [Income and Expenditures \(questions 21, 24-29\)](#)

About half (51%) of MoCreebec reported a household income of greater than \$1400 per month. Roughly 20% reported a monthly income of \$1000-1400 per month, and 15% reported a household income of less than \$1000 per month. The average household income for respondents is under \$15,000 per year. Yearly incomes for individuals were lower, with only 30% of respondents indicating a monthly income greater than \$1000. Sixteen percent of MoCreebec indicated their household had only one income source, and 65% noted between 2 and 4 household income sources. Only 30% of individual MoCreebec members surveyed consider themselves to be the main household provider. These figures together suggest that most households depend on several income earners, and also provide a picture of the MoCreebec community as flexible and innovative in maintaining their families and their community.

Government transfer payments (such as pensions, family allowance, student allowances, social assistance and unemployment insurance payments) made up the single largest income source reported (47% of respondents indicated their household receives some transfer payments), followed by wage income (earned by 30% of respondents) and other income-generating activities (22%).



Although transfer payments are indicated as a common income source for MoCreebec households, neither social assistance nor unemployment insurance are widely received. For example, 55% of MoCreebec members surveyed have never received unemployment insurance payments and the same percentage have never received social assistance. Only 3% have received unemployment insurance payments repeatedly (more than three times in the past five years). Social assistance is more frequently received, with 15% reporting they had received it three or more times in the past five years.

The single largest expense for MoCreebec households is food, followed by debt repayment. Most expenditures seem to be made locally with a few large items being purchased in Timmins or other southern locations. All told, the members of MoCreebec community appear to be contributing over 1.3 million into the local Moosonee-Moose Factory economy.

v. [Housing \(questions 30-35, 37-41, 44, 46, 47\)](#)

Almost 60% of MoCreebec have lived in their homes for less than ten years. This appears to be a factor of housing programs rather than high mobility amongst MoCreebec members, since over 60% of respondents have moved no more than once in the past five years. Sixty-three percent of MoCreebec members surveyed own the homes they live in. Most of these homes are mortgaged, and most mortgages are recent (over twenty years remaining). Eleven percent of the house lots are leased rather than owned. Forty-two percent of MoCreebec members reported they pay property taxes, while others noted that their taxes were incorporated into mortgage payments, and thus they paid taxes indirectly. Sixty percent agreed it is “fair” to pay property taxes as they stated there is a return on the taxes in terms of services, education and local government; and because taxes are levied universally. The few respondents who objected to paying taxes indicated they did so on the basis of aboriginal rights.

While there has been some effort to provide new housing for MoCreebec members over the past few years, the resulting accommodation continues to fall well short of the need. Almost half (47%) of MoCreebec surveyed noted they needed new housing either because of overcrowding in or the poor condition of their current houses. Sixty-four percent of MoCreebec homes are fully serviced. Water and sewage systems are the services most frequently lacking. Almost half of MoCreebec homes are heated by electricity (used by 47% of respondents), followed by wood heat (33%) and oil (16%). Seventeen percent of the homes had more than one heat source. Forty-five percent of MoCreebec indicated an interest in incorporating wood heat into their homes. Those rejecting wood heat felt that wood heat is too labour-intensive and is unsafe. Forty-five percent of MoCreebec surveyed noted that their homes were in need of major repair. Sixty percent indicated they are satisfied with their present homes. Those who reported dissatisfaction stated their housing lacked servicing, needed major repairs, and/or was too small. The housing program appears only marginally effective. In total, 37% of MoCreebec have applied for housing assistance while somewhat fewer have received such help. Almost all MoCreebec indicated their desire to eventually own their own homes, and 88% would prefer a greater variety of housing styles to be available.

Although the MoCreebec community is faced with housing problems ranging from lack of repairs to underservicing and overcrowding, a surprisingly low 57% indicated better housing programs were needed. Respondents' suggestions for improvements in housing included improving construction techniques using material better suited to the climate and local conditions, enhancing local control over housing programs, providing more choice in the style of housing and mortgage-gear-to-income schemes, and simply constructing more housing, including rental units.

vi. Health Care (questions 143-146, 148-152)

Over half (59%) of MoCreebec members receive their health care from the Moose Factory General Hospital, with the remainder receiving health care from the Moosonee Health Clinic. Twenty-nine percent of MoCreebec members surveyed make use of medical services more than three times a year, while 47% use the services less frequently.

Most respondents (81%) were satisfied with the health care delivery system in general, and an equally high number (82%) were satisfied with the medical services. Complaints reported by MoCreebec members surveyed in the area of health care included a lack of alternatives to the existing system, a lack of specialist services, the high turnover of non-Native staff and perceived overreliance on medical students. Most (79%) MoCreebec members surveyed wish to have a family doctor, stating they desired more personalised and informed medical services.

Eighty-four percent of MoCreebec members indicated they supported the construction of a new hospital in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area, with several recommending Moosonee as the site.

Almost all (95%) of MoCreebec support the employment of more trained Native staff, as employing Native staff is seen as providing culturally supportive and appropriate care to Moosonee-Moose Factory area residents, supporting local self-government and creating local employment. 83% agreed that area residents should be involved in the hiring of medical staff.

There was less unanimity on the question of the recognition of traditional Cree Healing techniques, with 45% supporting its recognition within the medical system and 35% opposed.

Arguments given in support of the use of traditional medicines included their proven efficacy and low cost. Those who opposed the use of traditional healing techniques felt that individuals should be free to choose the kind of health care they receive or that non-Native medical practitioners would reject traditional remedies despite local support.

## vii. Summary: Self-Government Issues

Ninety-three percent of MoCreebec want programs and services to be locally developed and delivered because localised services are perceived as more culturally sensitive and appropriate and also because they create local employment. A similarly high proportion (95%) of MoCreebec was greater accountability on the part of officials and programs currently serving them. The possibility of decreased federal and provincial involvement with the advent of self-government for the MoCreebec is acceptable to 89% of the MoCreebec surveyed. Eight MoCreebec members we also asked whether they accept the province as their service delivery agency, but none agreed.

It is clear the employment is an important consideration in both determining whether and where MoCreebec should establish a landbase. MoCreebec members holding steady work will be reluctant to move beyond commuting distance. Thus any new landbase should be able to provide an enhanced livelihood for the MoCreebec community, not only in traditional occupations such as hunting and gathering, but also in new ventures such as tourism. In sum, the new community must provide new opportunities (in areas such as employment), as well as opportunities to revitalise traditional ways.

Housing figures as a major barrier to the building to the building of a new community for the MoCreebec, especially if this community is located outside the Moosonee-Moose Factory area. In the case of housing, the long-term goal for the MoCreebec community of a MoCreebec landbase comes into direct conflict with members' immediate need for housing. Many MoCreebec surveyed own their own homes (or at least hold a mortgage to them) in Moosonee or

Moose Factory. They are unlikely to want to move to a new landbase unless they are able to sell these homes. Programs to meet the MoCreebec members' immediate housing needs may further hinder a move to a new landbase. It was suggested that MoCreebec members consider investing in rental housing (rather than home ownership) and in trailers, or other forms of housing which could easily be moved to a new site.

Consult participants indicated that they would find a new landbase appealing if it was serviced with electricity, water, and sewage system; thus the ease of servicing is also a factor for MoCreebec members to consider when choosing a land base. Good terrain and accessibility are also seen as important. Many questionnaire respondents and workshop participants suggested that the quality of housing in this new community must be an improvement on their existing housing stock (in particular, people desire to live in houses with basements). Because of the interlocking nature of the issues that must be dealt with in building a new community – including the seeming conflict between short-term and long-term goals – it was recommended that the MoCreebec organization undertake a comprehensive planning process early in their strategy to gain a landbase.

Health care and other social services seemed less important factors for MoCreebec questionnaire respondents in determining the site for a new community than did issues such as employment, housing, education and site accessibility. However, there was concern that an appropriate level of health services provided, and that MoCreebec members should be informed about the services and the service delivery mechanisms that available at the new site before making any decisions to move. Again, meeting these expressed desires might be possible through early and comprehensive community planning, including planning for the opportunity to create innovative and locally-controlled services.

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

### i. Linguistics and Cultural Survival (questions 10-11)

The MoCreebec form part of the Cree Nation. As language supports culture and the sharing of a common language is a symbol of nationhood, the MoCreebec are facing a serious challenge, as the Cree language is being lost by MoCreebec members. Cree is the primary language of only 40% of MoCreebec members (see table 4). The rate of the loss of the Cree language appears starkly when ability in Cree is compared across age groups: 73% of the people over age 40 have Cree as their primary language, while only 21% of those under 40 consider Cree to be their primary language. Lack of use is certainly a contributing factor in the loss of Cree. Overall, only 17% of MoCreebec commonly speak Cree in their homes (see Table 5). With only 1% of MoCreebec under 40 speaking Cree at home, it is unlikely that the next generation will be fluent in the language which was created by their own people, unless steps are taken to revive it.

The Cree spoken by MoCreebec members differs from that spoken by the Cree of Moose Factory. The MoCreebec speak an East Cree dialect, which creates some confusion and contributes to the loss of language proficiency amongst MoCreebec members. The East Coast Cree dialect is not taught in the schools in Moosonee and Moose Factory, as the available Heritage Language Program teaches only the West Coast dialect.

Table 4. Primary Language of MoCreebec Members Surveyed

	Total survey respondents	Survey respondents under age 40	Survey respondents over age 40
Cree	40%	21%	73%
English	50%	69%	17%
Both	10%	10%	10%

(figures expressed in rounded percentages)

Table 5. Language spoken in the homes of survey respondents

	Total survey respondents	Survey respondents under age 40	Survey respondents over age 40
Cree	17%	1%	45%
English	41%	54%	23%
Both	42%	45%	32%

(figures expressed in rounded percentages)

## ii. Trapping (questions 85\_97)

Only 32% of households are actively engaged in trapping, all in Ontario, most for under ten years and about half of these as a part-time occupation. Only one respondent reported harassment when trapping. Most trappers are satisfied with the location of their trapping area, with 6% of

trappers wishing to be closer to Moose Factory. Only 2% of trappers rejected the idea of sharing their area with other trappers. Fiscal investment in trapping is not great, with most trappers spending less than \$500 per year on trapping equipment. Furs are sold to the Ontario Trappers' Association (by 12% of trappers), to the Hudson's Bay Company, or to private buyers (5%). Although trapping makes up very little (generally less than 10%) of trappers' total income, only one person planned to stop trapping and 32% of people not trapping at the time of the questionnaire suggested they planned to trap in the future.

No one from MoCreebec participates in the Trappers Income Security Program established in Quebec under the JBNQA, and all MoCreebec members surveyed who responded agreed it would be a good program to develop for MoCreebec members. Most respondents felt that as beneficiaries of the JBNQA, the Income Security Program should be available to the MoCreebec community members regardless of where they trap (in Ontario or Quebec). Eighty-four percent of MoCreebec would back the development of other support programs for trapping (such as training and economic development). Some respondents suggested that trapping could be improved with better marketing of furs, larger trapping areas, the establishment of a fur harvesters' association and even fur farming. Most frequently recommended was a training program for youth (18% of suggestions for improving trapping). Respondents also suggested the local schools become more actively supportive of trapping through both in-school training by experienced trappers, and the restructuring of the school year to allow children to participate in the spring hunt.



### iii Hunting (questions 98-112)

Fifty-six percent of MoCreebec questionnaire respondents hunt, primarily in and around the Moosonee-Moose Factory area and the James Bay Coast. Only 3% of respondents reported current hunting in Quebec. The major species hunted are migratory birds (by 53% of those hunting), geese in particular; and moose (18% of those hunting). Only 12% of hunters never take their family on a hunting trip, while 3% generally hunt with family members. Few (8% of total respondents) are actively engaged in guiding for sports hunters. Half report they have never been harassed while hunting and only 6% actually report such harassment.

Although there appears to be a fairly active hunting sector amongst MoCreebec population, only 30% of respondents own a boat and motor. Their catch is seldom sold (by only 5% of hunters), but is usually shared, not only with family members but with community members as well. For 31% of hunters, the hunt brings in under 10% of their total food requirements. Only 14% indicate that hunted or 'country' food makes up over 30% of their total food intake. However, 90% of respondents eat country foods.

There was a wide range of suggestions made in the course of the Consult questionnaire and workshop to improve hunting. In general, programs to train hunters and to assist in the outfitting of the hunt were suggested, as well as the establishment of exclusive aboriginal hunting areas, and better management of wildlife and hunting incorporating indigenous management techniques. Eighty percent of MoCreebec surveyed supported the development of a wildlife management system based on aboriginal values. Ninety-four percent supported the sale of wild meat in a cooperative store.

#### iv. Fishing (questions 113-127)

Sixty percent of MoCreebec members fish, most (35% of that total) near the Moosonee-Moose Factory area. Fifty percent of MoCreebec fishers catch pike, 44% catch pickerel, 34% catch whitefish, 24% catch trout and 12% catch sturgeon. 45% of MoCreebec fishers make less than ten fishing trips a year. Only 2% of MoCreebec members guide sports fishers, and the same number reported being harassed while fishing. Most fishers (41%) fish only with a rod, while 4% set nets exclusively and 17% use both nets and a rod. 16% of MoCreebec respondents know how to make a net. About 50% of MoCreebec surveyed count on fish for under 10% of their food intake. 85% indicated that they eat fish even if they do not catch it themselves. However, very few (10%) smoke their own fish.

Most MoCreebec members surveyed (81%) would support the development of a commercial fishery. Other suggestions for improving fishing included formal training for youth, gear restrictions, and the designation of individual use areas. Reintroduction of traditional fisheries management based on Cree knowledge and values was recommended as part of a program to conserve fish stock. Developing both a fish hatchery and sports fishing camps was also suggested. There was some concern indicated that the fish stock is too limited for much development of fishing as an industry. However, MoCreebec feel that the single greatest threat to the fishery, domestic and commercial, the pollution of the waterways.

#### v. Traditional Skills (question 128-134)

Ninety percent of MoCreebec members surveyed believe it is important to have traditional skills. However, 18% claim to have no such skills. The most frequently mentioned traditional skills

possessed by respondents were survival skills (10%), and making of crafts (16%), snowshoes (9%), nets (6%), and clothes (5%). Most people (70%) know how to butcher wild game, with 44% indicating they know how to butcher small game. 17% have used their traditional skills in formal employment, primarily in goose camps.

Half of those MoCreebec members surveyed would be willing to teach the skills they know to others, and 83% would like to learn more about traditional skills. Just about everyone (93%) agrees that jobs requiring traditional should be made available.

One recommendation emanation from the Consult workshop was the establishment of a small business making and selling traditional equipment (such as snowshoes and nets) and crafts. This business could not only generate profit but could also act as a centre for the teaching of traditional skills.

#### vi. Gathering (questions 135-142)

Only 23% of MoCreebec gather berries, mostly blueberries and raspberries. Most berry-picking is done near the Moosonee-Moose Factory area. Only 4% of MoCreebec members surveyed gather plants and herbs for food, with fiddleheads and Labrador tea the most commonly harvested. Even fewer respondents (2%) gather medicinal herbs and plants, including gum, bark, and camomile. While MoCreebec people may not harvest frequently or a great amount, 21% claim to be able to identify food plants and 14% to identify medicinal plants.

Sixty-three percent of MoCreebec Surveyed indicated they felt that gathering natural, local foods and medicines is important to the maintenance of Cree culture. However, only 6% feel they have sufficient knowledge of plants to use them as food and medicine, and most of this percentage

would be willing to pass on this knowledge. While 83% expressed an interest in gaining more knowledge about gathering, slightly fewer (78%) would be willing to participate in a gathering course.

#### vii. Summary: Traditional Culture and Language Issues

The loss of the traditional Cree material culture is a serious concern for the MoCreebec. Consult participants indicated they feel a need for an area where MoCreebec can practice and pass on the material base of their culture. Achieving this goal would require more than a small landbase: instead, it requires no less than the formal recognition of MoCreebec rights on the land they traditionally use. Consult participants made recommendations for exclusive MoCreebec hunting and fishing areas and for the introduction of Cree resource management techniques on these and adjacent lands. A physical community – a landbase for the MoCreebec – accompanied by harvesting rights on adjacent territories would aid greatly in enhancing MoCreebec traditional material pursuits.

Accordingly, essential factors to be considered in the selection of a landbase are its current and potential use for traditional pursuits. A landbase not too distant from existing traplines would be preferable, as is one that would support the development of commercial offshoots of traditional land uses (such as commercial fishing tourism), and which is not already occupied by tourist outfitters and/or other aboriginal people. The MoCreebec group recommends in essence, the extension of land use, planning and management rights as defined in the JBNQA to a MoCreebec community in Ontario. Moving on such recommendations will likely be problematic since not only may the Ontario government resist any diminution or sharing of its land and resource

management prerogatives, but other aboriginal groups in the region may also object to the extension of land and accompanying rights exclusively to the MoCreebec.

The lack of landbase where East Cree culture and language are integral components of everyday life is also perceived as a major factor contributing to the loss of traditional culture and language which has accompanied the MoCreebec's loss of material culture. Without a landbase, the MoCreebec lack both the physical and the psychological cohesion necessary for linguistics and cultural survival. Numerous suggestions for reviving the East Cree culture of the MoCreebec emerged in the Consult workshop and through the collection of questionnaire data. In particular, the problem of the retention of Cree language shows in microcosm the complexity of the issues facing the MoCreebec, and generated through the Consult and exceptionally wide range of suggestions for future action.

Generally, Consult participants demonstrated that if the East Cree dialect is to survive amongst MoCreebec members, efforts to maintain East Cree must be made in both the public and private spheres of community life. In other words, recognition and support must come from both the formal educational system and in the home.

In the home, parents and grandparents must use Cree extensively – Cree once again must become the primary language of the MoCreebec. Unfortunately, most of the parents of today's children do not use Cree as their primary language. This is the generation which passed through Indian residential schools, which, with their narrow vision, have produced a generation of people who have been deprived of their Cree heritage. A public day care centre in which Cree was spoken would help greatly in building language skills amongst today's children and overcoming the negative legacy of the residential schools. Using Cree as a normal medium of public communication; on the radio, on television, in newsletters, at community meetings, and in

workshops and conferences is also needed. In sum, if the MoCreebec are to regain their East Coast Cree dialect, MoCreebec members must consciously make their distinct language once again an integral part of the living MoCreebec culture.

## THE FUTURE OF THE MOCREEBEC

MoCreebec members have demonstrated, through their contributions to the Consult process, that they feel strongly that

- the situation that now exists is unjust and must be changed;
- they are not willing to move back to their communities of official affiliation;
- they wish to explore establishing their own landbase; that they wish with their own recognized community or band; and
- they want some form of self-government with more flexibility and community control than that available under the Indian Act.

The historical and current implications of the JBNQA for the MoCreebec and MoCreebec's options for the future were major items of discussion throughout the Consult process. Consult participants indicate their problems with the JBNQA fall into three categories: the failure to involve them politically at the time of the signing of the Agreement; the loss of their beneficiary rights after ten years (pursuant to JBNQA Section 3.2.7); and their current inability to derive full benefits from the Agreement.

The members of the MoCreebec community indicated through the Consult that they have felt, since the signing of the JBNQA, that they have been abandoned by all parties to the Agreement and by the Ontario government as well. The Agreement was negotiated almost entirely without MoCreebec involvement or understanding. The members of the MoCreebec community did not gain the right to negotiate during the Agreement negotiations and still have won no active rights or support under the Agreement. Today, the MoCreebec community has no effective participation in JBNQA self-governing institutions, so it is politically isolated.

Consult participants suggested various paths to overcome the problem of their exclusion from the JBNQA. The MoCreebec organization could enter into negotiations for an adhesion to the JBNQA which would extend rights to the MoCreebec. (The province of Ontario has indicated an interest in this approach.) The MoCreebec organization could negotiate an amendment to the JBNQA. This option appears unlikely because the original participants have stated they are unwilling to reopen negotiations. The MoCreebec organization could negotiate a compensation package, essentially exclusive of the JBNQA, which might include Indian Act band status, a reserve, and some additional rights and benefits. Individual MoCreebec members could move back to Quebec. The MoCreebec community could take court action against some or all of the JBNQA participants for failing to include the MoCreebec in the Agreement. Finally, MoCreebec members could also lobby for support from GCC, other aboriginal organizations, and the public to have the JBNQA amended to overcome s.3.2.7. However, there is no obvious or easy solution to the problems posed for the MoCreebec by the JBNQA.

Furthermore, the MoCreebec people fear that the community self-government and accompanying landbase members require will be especially difficult for them to attain due to their widely-spread official affiliations. Bands with whom members are now linked may not wish to have their membership decrease through the transfer of affiliation on the part of MoCreebec members to a MoCreebec community, while other bands in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area may likewise resent the establishment of an exclusive MoCreebec landbase.

The MoCreebec have not yet determined the most effective and suitable strategies for achieving their goals. The strategies followed – whether legal challenges or further negotiations with involved governments or both – will need to be supplemented with effective lobbying to gain support from other indigenous organizations, from the public in general, from various political



parties and from governments. At the same time, the MoCreebec organization must undertake actions to build the strength and cohesiveness of the MoCreebec organization. The challenge of building a new community which faces the MoCreebec is enormous.

However, the issues confronting the MoCreebec are not limited to narrow legalistic or economic problems. Instead, the MoCreebec are faced with much broader problem of their survival as a discrete culture in an environment which does not provide them with the necessary support. What the MoCreebec people would like, most fundamentally, is the freedom to live as Cree people with a distinct language, culture and set of traditions in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area which they consider their home. Yet for the MoCreebec, the dominance of non-aboriginal culture has been so complete and so prolonged that many MoCreebec members have lost pride in their Cree culture and language. Traditional forms of exchange have been outlawed; traditional economies and political structures undermined and controlled; aboriginal knowledge, skills and technologies, developed through centuries of living in harmony with each other and the land, neither recognised nor respected. So little of Cree culture has been passed to the youth of today that few MoCreebec members now hold the knowledge, belief-system and language that make up their heritage. The pace of change is so rapid that both youth and elders are becoming alienated from one another. Elders and their wisdom are of little interest to the youth who are barely able to hold on to the swiftly-changing fads and fashions of the late twentieth century. For the young, the rich Cree culture has been subsumed in the noise of the south. Yet attempting to live in another culture, one which is essentially foreign, is not easy or comfortable: Many youths mask their problems in alcohol and drug abuse, ashamed of their origins and ignoring their elders.

There is no simple way to regain and maintain one's heritage when so much has been subsumed by another culture. In the absence of official recognition and support, the MoCreebec have been constrained in their efforts to construct a positive community identity for themselves. Instead, their identity has most often been constructed negatively, by reference to what is not: The MoCreebec are East Coast Cree outside of Quebec, living in Ontario but not "Ontario Indians" under Treaty No. 9, and are outside the realm of official recognition. Importantly, the Consult '87 process represents one step beyond these negative identities and towards the construction of a positive MoCreebec identity.

## Recommendations

### i. Linguistic and Cultural Survival

1. Establish an elders conference and program to record cultural wisdom, knowledge and history.
2. Establish a wilderness camp where traditional skills, knowledge and Cree culture can be passed on.
3. Establish a small business for the manufacture and sale of traditional tools and crafts, and where training in tool-making could take place.
4. Return to the traditional land-based activities, at least part of the time.
5. Revive Cree spirituality.
6. Establish culturally appropriate Cree-based counselling programs for drug and alcohol abuse.
7. Begin a local history project to record elders and to develop/cement MoCreebec community affiliation.
8. Introduce East Coast Cree language program in school.
9. Introduce East Coast Cree language program for adults through a continuing education program.
10. Create parents' and elders' organizations to work for and support the introduction of East Coast Cree language and culture into the school system.
11. Establish a day care centre with East Coast Cree as the primary language.
12. Use Cree more in meetings, newsletters, on television; generally, revive Cree as the primary means of communication in the community.
13. Use Cree more in the home.

## ii. Education

14. As part of a comprehensive plan, develop an education plan for the new community.
15. Establish a committee of parents and elders to introduce East Coast Cree and culture into current education system.
16. Establish a Cree day care centre.
17. Start an adult Cree language centre.
18. Encourage the development of job training programs for locally-available employment opportunities.

## iii. Employment

19. Ensure that employment and development opportunities are considered when choosing a new landbase.

## iv. Housing

20. Invest in rental housing and/or housing that is easily transportable.
21. Ensure that the new community site is easily and fully serviced.
22. Develop a program to assist members who move to the new site to sell their homes.

## v. Health

23. Construct a new hospital.
24. Implement affirmative hiring of aboriginal staff at the hospital
25. Implement local involvement in the hiring of hospital staff.

## vi. Traditional Pursuits

26. Extend the JBNQA Income Security Program to MoCreebec trappers.
27. Improve fur marketing.
28. Expand trapping areas.
29. Organize a trappers' association.
30. Establish a training program, in school, for young trappers, conducted by experienced MoCreebec trappers.
31. Restructure the school year so that children may participate in the spring hunt.
32. Establish a training program for hunters.
33. Designate exclusive aboriginal hunting areas.
34. Introduce resource management programs which incorporate Cree knowledge.
35. Sell wild meat in a co-operative store.
36. Develop commercial fishing if fish stocks allow.
37. Train youth in traditional pursuits.
38. Designate exclusive aboriginal fishing areas.
39. Develop tourist fishing camps, if stocks allow.
40. Develop fish farming.
41. Halt the pollution of rivers.
42. Extend harvesting, planning and management rights as set out in the JBNQA to MoCreebec
43. Ensure that the new landbase can support the use and development of traditional pursuits.
44. Establish jobs using traditional skills.
45. Provide education on traditional harvesting and the use of plants for medicine and food.

## vii. The Question of a Landbase

46. The MoCreebec organization must work to gain a landbase.
47. The MoCreebec community must issue a declaration proclaiming its rights and existence.
48. The MoCreebec organization must solicit support for a MoCreebec landbase from other aboriginal peoples and the general public, and lobby for the support of federal and provincial governments.
49. The MoCreebec organization must initiate a feasibility study of various potential landbase sites, and present the study results to the MoCreebec community in a referendum.
50. The MoCreebec organization must develop a comprehensive plan for the new community, including services, social services, zoning, and economic development.
51. The MoCreebec Organization must develop and implement its own appropriate programs and services.

## viii. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

52. Lobby or take court action to amend the JBNQA to remove the 10-year residency clause (3.2.7.).
53. Open negotiations to have the aboriginal rights recognized in the JBNQA extended to the MoCreebec resident in Ontario.
54. Campaign for public and aboriginal support for MoCreebec rights and a landbase.
55. The MoCreebec organization and community must become a stronger, more united and active group to ensure success in all endeavours.