



SENATE
Apihtow-kosison nekanapowin
MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA
Apihtow-kosison peyakosihtwawin

DELORES JOHNSON

Applicant

and

MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRAL REGISTRY

Respondent

DECISION

OF THE MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA SENATE

Dated the 05th day of August, 2007

UPON hearing the submissions and reading the material provided by or on behalf of the Applicant and the Respondent in this matter, the METIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA SENATE HAS DETERMINED THE FOLLOWING:

1. The MNBC Senate finds in favour of the Métis Nation British Columbia's Central Registry.
 - a. It ought to be noted that should the parameters for MNBC citizenship change, or if the applicant discovers new information or documentation, that this decision does not limit or negate the applicant from reapplying for MNBC citizenship.
 - b. Please refer to the full decision which is attached or can be downloaded from the MNBC website at <http://www.mnbc.ca/senate> and click on the decision tab in the upper center portion of the webpage.

Signed on behalf of the Senate,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean Trumbley", is written over a horizontal line.

Dean Trumbley
Interim Senate Clerk

HEARD IN FRONT OF THE MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA'S SENATE

Appeal Name: Johnson vs. MNBC Central Registry,
1-11-06-41-3-00002

Date: 20070805
Senate Clerk: Trumbley
Location: Kelowna

Between:

Delores Johnson

Applicant

And

**Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)
Central Registry**

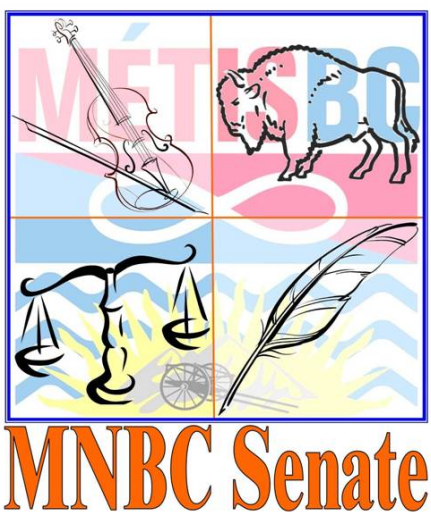
Respondent

Reasons for Decision

Residing Senators:

Senator Philip Gladue
Senator Margaret Penner
Senator Bill Thibeault

Senator Bob Adams
Senator Ron Snider



Introduction

[1] On March 07, 2007 the applicant, Mrs. Delores Johnson received a letter from the respondent, the MNBC Central Registry, indicating that her citizenship could not be validated or verified based on the qualifiers for MNBC Citizenship. Specifically, the respondent's letter highlighted:

"the national definition for the Métis (ratified in the MNBC Constitution) does not include individuals whose ancestry originates from Quebec, at this time, based on the historical research to date".

However, the applicant disputes this decision based on the claim that her aboriginal ancestry does not originate from Quebec but instead Simcoe County/Penatanguishine what is now a part of the Historic Métis Nation Homeland in Ontario. Those aboriginal ancestors then moved to Quebec and eventually out west.

Summary of the Case Law and MNBC Legislation

a) Canadian Law

[2] Subsections 35(1) and (2) of the **Constitution Act, 1982**, being Schedule B to the **Canada Act 1982** (U.K.), 1982, c. 11 state:

35(1) the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

35(2) in this act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

[3] The definitive Supreme Court of Canada case setting out the requirements for establishing a Métis constitutional right is **R. v. Powley**, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 207, 230 D.L.R. (4th) 1, 177 C.C.C. (3d) 193, 2003 SCC 43. At paragraph 10, the Court defined the term "Métis" as it is used in s. 35, finding that while the term does not include all individuals with mixed

Indian and European heritage, it does refer to:

...distinctive people who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and a recognizable group identity separate from their Indian or Inuit and European forebears.

b) MNBC Legislation, Policies and Procedures

[4] Section 62 of the **MNBC Constitution** states that a Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation. The MNBC Constitution further states the following;

a) 62.1. *"Historic Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-Breeds who resided in Historic Métis Nation Homeland.*

b) 62.2. *"Historic Métis Nation Homeland" means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-Breeds as they were then known.*

c) 62.3. *"Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation, which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the "aboriginal peoples of Canada" within Section 35 of the **Constitution Act of 1982.***

d) 62.4. *"Distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples" means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.*

[5] Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the **MNBC Citizenship Act** further define the **MNBC Constitution** definition of Métis as stated above and more specifically the process in identifying citizens.

[6] Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the **MNBC Citizenship Act** highlight the roles and responsibilities of the Central Registry, Registry Office and the Registrar. It further states in 8.0 that the registrar must adhere to all policies and procedures developed by the MNBC. This includes the MNBC Guidebook, Central Registry Policy and Procedures and the Senate Policy and Procedures.

[7] Section 9.0 of the **Senate Policies and Procedures**

highlights the process utilized when conducting a citizenship and/or central registry appeal. Section 9.4.1 and 9.4.2 further enforces the required adherence to the national definition.

Second Genealogical Opinion

a) Société historique de Saint-Boniface

[8] Mr. Gilles Lesage, Directeur général of the Société historique de Saint-Boniface supplied a second professional genealogical opinion by e-mail on August 01, 2007. Mr. Lesage indicated the following;

"In the case of Delores Johnson, we have not been able to locate any direct ancestor which would have been officially recognized as a Métis. The André Pilon for whom there is a scrip record included in the documentation you provided to us is a related uncle to an ancestor of hers however his descendants would be Métis (his children onwards) but not André's siblings or their descendants. Jeanne Marie Joan Bédard's father is from a couple living in Québec which does not link to any Métis family and her mother Roseanne Leblanc is also a daughter from a Québec family which has no link to a Métis family."

The Standard of Review

[9] The Senate's role is to ensure that all legislation, policies and procedures were adhered to and that the applicant has received a fair decision during the application review period. Since this appeal involves a question around the genealogical interpretation of the respondent, the Senate has ordered a second professional opinion to assist in their review. Furthermore, the Senate will adhere to the citizenship and/or central registry appeal process highlighted in Section 9.0 of the **Senate Policies and Procedures**. The Senate further understands that the onus to prove citizenship is the responsibility of the applicant, Mrs. Johnson not the respondent, the MNBC Central Registry.

[10] The Senate has based this decision on the evidence supplied by the applicant and respondent and weighed this to the summary of case law at the time of the hearing.

Analysis

a) MNBC Policy and Procedure Adherence

[11] Although this case does not deal with a breach in policy or procedure, the Senate upon review, found that the MNBC Central Registry did not violate or over-look any policies or procedures.

b) Genealogical Interpretation

[12] Both the MNBC Central Registry and the historique de Saint-Boniface indicated that they could not determine a link and/or ancestor that identified as Métis and resided within the Métis Nation Homeland.

[13] Furthermore, the aboriginal ancestry was identified by the genealogical research as Huron from the Quebec areas. Although the ancestry does identify an aboriginal and a French-Canadian background none of these ancestors were found to have identified as Métis or Half-Breed or had network (via family or community) connections within the Métis Homeland. *R. v. Powley*, [2003] the Court defined the term Métis as "...distinctive people who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and a recognizable group identity separate from their Indian or Inuit and European forebears".

[14] Based on the information supplied, testimony and the genealogical opinions (MNBC Central Registry and the historique de Saint-Boniface) the Senate could not identify a direct bloodline connection to the Métis Homeland or the presence of a Métis ancestor in Mrs. Johnson's genealogy. All eight Métis family names supplied by the applicant were ruled

out by the genealogical opinions as not being direct descendants but instead being 3-5 generation removed from the primary ancestor that originated in Quebec. No information was supplied by the applicant on the paternal "Thompson" line therefore, it could not be ruled on.

c) MNBC Legislative Adherence

[15] Mrs. Johnson fails to comply with two parts of the National Definition as specified in the *MNBC Citizenship Act*. Those being;

- i) Mrs. Johnson failed to supply the appropriate documentation that proves her historic Métis Nation Ancestry.
- ii) Mrs. Johnson failed to supply the appropriate documentation that proves her ancestry is distinctly unique from First Nations.

Decision

[16] The MNBC Senate finds in favour of the Métis Nation British Columbia's Central Registry.

[17] It ought to be noted that should the parameters for MNBC citizenship change, or if the applicant discovers new information or documentation, that this decision does not limit or negate the applicant from reapplying for MNBC citizenship.