

Interview Questions for Jennifer Brown, one of the National Youth Summit Participants.

For those people that do not know. What was the National Youth Summit? What was discussed?

The National Youth Summit, was a meeting arranged by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs/Federal Interlocutor of Metis and Non-Status Andy Scott, as a means to show Aboriginal youth of Canada what would occur at the First Ministers Meeting held the following week in Kelowna. Basically the intention of the summit was to discuss the five areas of Health, Education, Housing, Economic Opportunities and Relationships - which were also the issues to be discussed at the FMM. The participants of the National Youth Summit were all Aboriginal youth from national Aboriginal organizations, in each group we discussed the five issues, looking at concerns and also identifying means to correct the situation that would be beneficial to all Canadians not just the Aboriginal population. Within the Metis group we looked at the overall issues that do affect the five areas, and our most common concern was the having the government address the jurisdictional responsibility for the Metis. There is a common misconception in Canadian society that Metis are like First Nations, and that's an incorrect assumption the Metis have long been a proverbial football if you will being thrown back and forth between the Federal and Provincial governments neither wanting to take responsibility for the Metis as an Aboriginal people in Canada. Issues, concerns and solutions varied from each group in relation to the topic discussions.

What did you learn about the First Ministers Meeting?

I was in a unique situation as a participant of the National Youth Summit, through my involvement with the Metis National Council Board of Governors I was informed of relevant aspects of the FMM prior to attending the National Youth Summit and the FMM itself. I think the one thing I learned from the real FMM in Kelowna is that some provinces are more respectful of Aboriginal self-government than others. I say that because prior to my presentation on behalf of the Metis Nation on Education, Premier Doer stated that his government would work towards creating educational tools and opportunities for the Aboriginal peoples, and I noted in my address on Education that, that is not what we want, we want to be able to do this for ourselves and have government work with us, to walk beside us and not lead us.

What did you like about the process involved in this meeting?

For me personally, what I liked most about the process taken in this meeting was that when they broke into the groups they had a Metis specific group which was members of the Metis National Council only. I am very much a Metis Nation nationalist and it meant a great deal to me, to know that when Metis issues were to be discussed it would be discussed with the citizens of the Metis Nation, not representatives of Pan-Aboriginal, special interest or service delivery groups.

What type of role can you envision for economic development in the upcoming First Ministers Meeting?

Its some what hard to answer this question now, considering that the FMM has already come and gone and I did participate at the FMM. But if I think back to my thoughts of a week ago, I honestly believed that Economic Opportunities, as it was called was to be a very small piece of the agenda. Personally for me I thought that Health, Housing, Education and Relationship were much more the priority. I'm pleased though that when discussing Economic Opportunities the government looked outside of the box when hearing the representative voices at the table.