

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

First, I sincerely thank everyone who participated in the work of this Commission. You responded to our challenges with honour and dignity that enriched us all. I believe, with your helpful support and valuable input, we have fulfilled our Terms of Reference and Mandate. Now our words must be put into action. Our mission to create change and make a difference will only be realized by disciplined and lasting action. We must all act on the vision of one community – Champions for Change, working together in respectful ways.

When we began our work, we suggested meaningful change would require positive relationships, working partnerships and shared responsibilities. You added that they should be based on First Nations and Metis traditions and values. The themes that emerged, building on our strengths, focusing on youth and working together, are the common elements of everyone's success. Acting on these themes will leave a legacy of hope. The solutions that you suggested for reform in our community discussions are wide-ranging. They take everyone into account and are concerned with cultural issues, spirituality and respect.

As chairperson, I had the honour to observe the outstanding work you do. I believe with the current circumstances Saskatchewan has the best opportunity to lead in improving the way of life of First Nations and Metis peoples. *Nitotaymitik!* We must do our share. The goal is that in a decade, the benefits of change will make Saskatchewan the best province in Canada. No more frozen bodies. Instead, a collective celebration of life. Where there is hatred, love. No more violence or any form of abuse. Where there is injury, pardon. No more of our youth taking their own lives. Instead, where there is despair, hope and choosing to live fully our blessings. Where there is doubt, faith.

We have listed eight important areas where reform must take place in a way that allows individuals and communities to take on responsibility and support each other. In my Cree language – *Opintowin* – means lifting each other up. World standards, where they are higher, should be our goal in creating safer communities, especially for our children. The plan for change paints a picture full of hope of a better future. Again, it requires action, making us all Champions for Change. The different way we propose is to return justice to the community. The Elders remind us we are truly one in Spirit and there we together hold all the fundamentals of success.

The Centennial year of 2005 offers us an opportunity to reflect on this new path and celebrate change. Perhaps it is time for a new Treaty in Saskatchewan, a Friendship Treaty among all the peoples of the province, calling for change and a plan of action to ensure our collective vision is put into practice. And then, legislation by all four partners that makes this new relationship official. A partnership in action.

W. Littlechild

