



# Le Métis



## President's Message

Friday March 8, 2013 is a day that will be forever known as a new beginning for the Métis People.

The Manitoba Métis Land Claim had languished on a shelf for a number of years before I began my first term as President of the Manitoba Metis Federation. When I became President in 1997, your Métis made a commitment to revitalize our Manitoba Metis Federation Land Claim. One of the first things I did as President was to make our Land Claim truly a claim of the People. Instead of putting my name on the Land Claim as *Chartrand vs Canada*, I put the land claim in the name of our people. The Land Claim became the Manitoba Metis Federation vs Canada land claim. As the representative government of the Métis of Manitoba, the Manitoba Metis Federation by this one action breathed new and necessary life into our nearly hundred and twenty year old claim.

The Manitoba Métis Land Claim slowly made its way through the Queen's Bench, the Court of Appeal and finally to the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) in March 2013 where the Court accepted the Manitoba Metis Federation's right to govern and acknowledged it as the body that represents the Manitoba Métis in this collective claim against the Crown.

Also on that historic day, the SCC said the Federal Government had not kept its word and broke a solemn promise. The Court recognized the injustice committed against the Métis, spoke the truth of our history, and vindicated our People. For decades, together we fought to protect our land rights in the political and legal arenas. After more than 100 years of our People's struggles, our Métis victory made it clear this was the time to right past wrongs.

This battle we led to victory for the Métis of Manitoba took sacrifice, persistent hard work and \$5.6 million dollars. The Federal Government did its best to bankrupt us. In fact when I first became President, the MMF was over \$300,000 in debt on the Land Claim file.

With clear vision, persuasion and strong management, your Métis Government, with your support, were able to bring the MMF back into the black. We raised the necessary funds to pay the lawyers who fought alongside us as we worked to right this historic wrong. Along the way, the MMF also grew. Today it is the democratic, self-governing body representing Manitoba's Métis people and employs nearly 750 people in 7 regions province wide.

At the time of the 2013 Supreme Court Decision, I said it will have the biggest impact on the Métis People since the Battle of Batoche. We are a Nation with a history and rights that are often ignored - but no longer. Our time has come!

After our historic win, your Métis Government secured commitments from both the Liberal and NDP parties to support the settlement of the Manitoba Métis Land Claim. We were even able to secure a commitment on video from Justin Trudeau - who wasn't Prime Minister at that time. This commitment was shown to the Métis Citizens at the 2013 Annual General Assembly.

Also during this Assembly, we asked the Métis Citizens what should be done with any settlement from the Land Claim once it has been negotiated. The unanimous response we received stands as one of the greatest moments of my life. To see our Métis Citizens - many who are the working poor - stand together and say they want whatever we win to be placed in trust for the benefit of our children and their children and future generations gave me great pride. This wisdom of our leaders and our people will ensure our Métis children will finally get the head start that was promised over a century ago.

Again in 2015 when the writ was dropped for the Federal Election, I met face to face with Justin Trudeau to remind him of his commitment to the Métis. Mr.

Trudeau again recommitted to settling this land claim in a letter written to me and in the election campaign literature. Immediately after winning the 2015 Federal Election, the new Prime Minister - Justin Trudeau - reached out to us to begin the process of settling this outstanding Land Claim.

The Métis are Canada's negotiating partners in Confederation. The Federal Government was the other partner - and they left the table. Now, with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on May 27th, the Government is coming back to the negotiating table.

We are committed to pursuing the best opportunities for our people today and for future generations. After years of struggle, your Métis Government is preparing to negotiate on your behalf the settlement of the collective claim of Manitoba's Métis Community. Together, we will stand and protect our rights and interests in the negotiations to come. This has been called the unfinished business of Confederation. It is now time for the partners to work together to finish this equitably and honourably.

We have begun undertaking sessions across the province to inform our Métis Citizens of our steps in developing a modern day treaty with Canada. As of my writing this message, we have already consulted Métis Citizens in Churchill, Duck Bay, Camperville, and surrounding areas. We are meeting with our Métis Citizens all summer long. Visit our website at [www.mmf.mb.ca](http://www.mmf.mb.ca) for more information on our Land Claim Consultations. Also tune into Metis Hour x2 for my weekly report. Here you will also find information on what your Métis Government is doing in developing the Framework Agreement to settle our Land Claim.

As your President, I offer my thoughts and prayers for those who are shut-in or are having difficult times through failing health, sickness or loss. May you find company, encouragement, and help through your connections with family, friends and community. I wish you the best as you enjoy these warm summer days.

Meeqwetch,

∞ *President David Chartrand, LL.D. (hon), O.M.*

## Advancing a Nation

Fifty-five delegates from the Métis Nation governments gathered in Winnipeg over June 17-18th for the Métis National Council (MNC) 2016 General Assembly (GA). During the Assembly, and the Constitutional Convention that took place immediately prior on June 16th, delegates discussed the Métis Nation Constitution and the path toward the Government-to-Government, Nation-to-Nation relationship between the Métis Nation and Canada.

The delegation at the Constitutional Convention discussed a process for completing the Métis Nation Constitution document. This process, along with a timeline, was passed as a GA resolution two days later.

The timeline includes implementing a 'Declaration of Rights and Principles of the Métis Nation' in fall 2016. This declaration is anticipated to outline objectives and goals for the constitution document. Many delegates expressed their desire to put more time and work into the constitution, including more collective efforts and input from Métis Citizens and communities.

"I'm very encouraged by people saying we need to work on this. We haven't had that sentiment before, so this is a positive start to that dialogue," said President Clément Chartier of MNC. "We're going to come up with a good plan to move things forward and arrive in the future with a Constitution consistent across the Métis Homeland."

Work on the document will continue in coming months. The final draft is planned to be reviewed at the MNC General Assembly in 2017.

In his State of the Nation address, President Chartier explained the new federal government has made three commitments to the Métis Nation in pursuit of reconciliation: first, to renew the nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and the Métis; second, to establish negotiations toward a land claims settlement with the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF); and third, to establish a federal process for Métis rights and claims.

A momentous first step towards the MMF Land Claim settlement was taken with the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between MMF President David Chartrand and Canada's Minister of Indigenous & Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett. The MOU is a milestone in the process of settling the MMF Land Claim and addressing the SCC ruling in March 2013 on the MMF Land Claim.

"I will be in consultations throughout the summer and visiting a lot of my people, locals, and regional assemblies," said MMF President David Chartrand. "I will be getting their input on the process of where we're moving and how we're moving, and educating them so they're fully aware of where their government



MNC President Clément Chartier and MMF President David Chartrand at the 2016 MNC General Assembly.

is taking them."

The General Assembly was accompanied by a symposium on the emergence of the Métis Nation, as well as a cultural celebration for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Seven Oaks, Métis leader Cuthbert Grant, and the Métis Nation flag.

The MNC and the Métis Nation Governments will

gather again at a General Assembly in September 2016. It is currently envisioned that the delegates will discuss ongoing issues pertinent to the Métis People, including the Constitution, the Daniels court case, and the next steps toward reconciliation with Canada. The Métis Governments will continue to work together on advancing the growth, progress and development of the Métis Nation and its Citizens.



President Clément Chartier gives the State of the Nation address at the 2016 MNC General Assembly.



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**MMF Annual General Assembly**

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# Igniting a Nation: Two Hundred Years Strong

Sunday, June 19 marked the anniversary of an important day in the history of the Métis Nation – it was two hundred years since the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks. The battle was instrumental in demonstrating the power and unity of the Métis in their fight for free trade rights and recognition as an independent people – their own Nation.

To commemorate the significance of this event, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) hosted a day of cultural celebration honouring: Cuthbert Grant, leader of the Métis at the battle; the anniversary of the battle itself; and the Métis Infinity flag. The commemoration took place as part of the Métis National Council's 2016 General Assembly in Winnipeg – which was formerly known as the Red River Settlement, the birthplace of the Métis Nation and the heart of the Métis Nation Homeland.

Commemorative events began in the morning with Mass at the St. François Xavier Roman Catholic Parish in the town of St. François Xavier – a town founded by Cuthbert Grant. Mass, followed by a gravesite memorial and wreath-laying for Cuthbert Grant, was presided over by Father Michel Nault. During the gravesite commemoration Minister Leah LaPlante of the MMF noted parallels between the General Assembly and the historical Battle of Seven Oaks.

"If you think back 200 years, the people that were meeting and congregating here – they were no different than the Métis today. For the last three days, we've been meeting and planning for the lives of our children and grandchildren. What [Cuthbert Grant and the Métis] were trying to do [at the Battle of Seven Oaks] is the same as what we're trying to do this weekend," said Minister LaPlante. "That is to take care of ourselves, to be healthy, to have healthy families, and to feel that we're very much a part of this country."

The celebration continued with a lunch of bison dogs and burgers at Grant's Old Mill on Portage Avenue



President David Chartrand cutting the ribbon at the unveiling ceremony for the revitalised Battle of Seven Oaks National Historic Site.

in Winnipeg. During the picnic lunch guests were treated to great entertainment by Métis dancers and musicians. The Mill, also a museum, is a re-creation of the watermill built by Cuthbert Grant in 1829 to help feed the Métis people. The museum houses a functioning flourmill that uses millstones to grind wheat into flour, similar to the way flour would have been made in the 1800s. Commemoration attendees were able to tour the Mill and see a demonstration of flour being made.

Festivities concluded at the Battle of Seven Oaks National Historic Site located at the intersection of Main Street and Rupert's Land Boulevard in Winnipeg. The area was historically known as Frog Plain, and many Métis refer to the Battle of Seven Oaks as "La Victoire de la Grenouillère" – the Victory of Frog Plain. Their triumph in the battle ignited a strong sense of

nationalism in the Citizens of the emerging Métis Nation.

"The Métis have always defended our homeland; we've defended it for generations," said President David Chartrand of the MMF. "The Battle of Seven Oaks is known as such by others, but not by us. We didn't write that history. This is the Victory of Frog Plain according to the history of our people, and it will be known as that by our people forever."

A ceremonial ribbon-cutting celebrated the revitalised National Historic Site. This renewal began as a class project of students from Governor Semple School and took eight years to complete. A moment of silence was held at the beginning of the commemoration to respect and remember all lives lost at this critical and important time in history.



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Preference will be given to qualified Métis applicants. Qualified applicants are encouraged to apply and self-identify on their resume. The MMF appreciates the interest of all applicants; however, only those individuals considered for an interview will be contacted. We offer a competitive benefits package which includes but not limited to: health and dental insurance, life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, short term and long term disability and a retirement savings plan.

Please forward cover letter and resume  
by **Friday, July 22, 2016** to:  
MMF Metis Employment & Training Dept.  
300-150 Henry Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0J7  
email to: [metresumes@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:metresumes@mmf.mb.ca)  
fax to: (204) 947-3251

## Building a Foundation for Land Claims

This year has launched a new era of reconciliation for the Manitoba Métis Community. President David Chartrand of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) has begun a series of community consultations around Manitoba, regarding the creation of a Land Claims Framework Agreement (also known as a modern day treaty) with Canada for the Manitoba Métis Citizens.

In May, President Chartrand signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on behalf of the Manitoba Métis Community with Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous & Northern Affairs for the government of Canada. The MOU signing marked the first meaningful step toward resolving, with Canada, its historic failure to implement Métis land grants, as set out in S. 31 of *The Manitoba Act, 1870*.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 2013 that the federal government must negotiate with the MMF to settle the land claim. The next step in the negotiations process for our land claim will be creating a Framework Agreement. This agreement will include a list of topics that the MMF and Canada will negotiate together in settling our Land Claim.

Community consultations are being held across Manitoba to inform Métis Citizens and gain community input for subjects to be discussed in the Framework Agreement. The first community consultation meeting was held July 7, 2016 in Churchill, Manitoba.

President Chartrand discussed the progress of the *MMF Land Claim* case at length in his presentation. He assured Métis Citizens in Churchill that Manitoba Métis communities in the north would not be forgotten in the negotiations process. He restated one Métis community has no lesser rights than another. He also explained the importance of the Framework Agreement in setting out a federal claims process for the Métis. This process will be essential in establishing a modern day land claims treaty with the government of Canada.

"This case isn't for individuals. This is the people's



MMF President David Chartrand speaking to Métis Elders during community consultations in Churchill, Manitoba.

case. This is a collective case about our people as a Nation, which is very important," said President Chartrand. "The governments said the MMF didn't have a right to take the case forward. However, the Supreme Court agreed the MMF does represent the collective interest of all Manitoba Métis."

President Chartrand went on to explain the settlement will be put into a trust, as indicated and passed by resolution unanimously during the 2013 MMF General Assembly. This trust will ensure there is benefit for future generations of Métis Citizens of Manitoba in the areas of education, health care, economic development, and more.

Community consultations on Land Claims will continue throughout the summer across Manitoba. For a list of upcoming meetings, please follow the MMF on Twitter [@MBMetis\\_MMF](https://twitter.com/MBMetis_MMF) or visit our website at [www.mmf.mb.ca](http://www.mmf.mb.ca).



MMF President Chartrand speaking to Métis Citizens during community consultations in Churchill, Manitoba.

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