



Le Metis



President's Message

Happy New Year! I hope you had a peaceful and joyous holiday filled with love, laughter and the comfort of your family and friends. I am enjoying some quality time with my own family and friends after a busy 2017.

2017 was a very successful year for the Metis Government and our many affiliates. We are all committed to making positive advancements across all programs for our Metis Citizens. 2018 will see many more initiatives and advances. I look forward to sharing all of this information with you as we make continued progress.

Yesterday I was humbled to receive the Sovereign Medal from the Lieutenant Governor, Janice Filmon. The medal celebrates individuals who contribute their time and effort to the betterment of a community. This

is not a medal meant for me alone. I share it with our Metis Government, who helps to achieve the vision I have for our Citizens. I share it with the MMF staff who run the programs and services. And I share it with you, the Metis Citizens, because you have allowed me to lead our Metis Government for 20 years.

Minister of Indigenous Services Jane Philpott has told me that our Metis Health and Wellness program should be expanded in this upcoming budget announcement. Our Metis Citizens deserve better access to healthcare at all stages of life. To be able to expand our Health and Wellness Program beyond the Prescription Drug Program we announced in November would be an important step in this direction.

We have important work to do this year in fully transitioning to a self-government model. I will be working closely with our Ministers and MMF staff to ensure this is carried out successfully. Together we will look at what we're currently doing that can continue as is, and what needs to change or improve under this model. At the heart of this work will be the Metis Citizens and the strengthening of our nation.

2018 is an election year for our Government. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our current Ministers for their continued good work, much of which

was highlighted at our Annual General Assembly in September. It's so important for Citizens to participate in this process. This is our first election year as a recognized self-government. Your voice matters. If you want to work on behalf of your Metis Citizens, I encourage you to run for office. More information will be available in future issues of Le Metis.

An exciting project is underway at our Home Office as we speak. We are developing a new website which will make information easier to access. It will look cleaner and you will be able to easily search for the information you need most. I'm personally excited about the new blog feature which will allow me to connect with our Metis Citizens in a more timely way. We will share a launch date as the project comes closer to completion.

I offer my best wishes for those who are sick or shut-in. May they be blessed with healing, health, and peace. I share my heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies for all our neighbours, friends, and families who have lost loved ones. On behalf of our Metis Government, staff, and Citizens, I wish everyone a healthy, happy and blessed 2018!

Meeqwetch,

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

Ambroise-Didyme Lépine: A Strong Métis Leader

When people think back on the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870, they think of Louis Riel first. But equally important to this movement was Ambroise-Didyme Lépine. Born in St. Boniface in 1840, Lépine was the son of Jean-Baptiste Lépine, a French-Canadian farmer from Quebec, and Julie Henry, a Métis woman with Saskatchewan roots.

Lépine was born during a time that was prosperous for many Métis and French-Canadian patriarchs who were able to establish themselves and become leaders of the Métis Settlement. In 1859 at the age of 19, Lépine married Cecille Marion. They had 14 children together and took up agriculture on a farm in the south end of Winnipeg. Lépine and his wife were neighbours of Louis Riel.

In January 1870, Lépine was appointed Adjutant General to administer justice in the Red River Settlement under Riel's provisional government. His military leadership amongst the Métis was attributed to his cool demeanor and impressive physical strength. While Lépine was not known for having a strong political background, he was a loyal to Riel, the church and the Métis Community.

Lépine served in the provisional government as military commander and presided at the war council, which condemned Thomas Scott. Scott's execution had profound repercussions for Lépine. After the arrival of troops led by Colonel Garnet Joseph Wolseley in the summer of 1870, Lépine, like Riel, feared for his life and fled.

Over the next three years, Lépine hid in Métis communities in Manitoba, Dakota and Minnesota, still hoping to receive amnesty from the government of Sir John A. Macdonald. In 1872, Lépine and Riel helped lieutenant governor Adam Archibald organize a Métis army to defeat a Manitoba conquest plan by a group of Irish Fenians. Given the increasing danger of their arrest, Lépine and Riel were persuaded by Bishop Alexandre-Antonin Taché to go into voluntary exile in the United States.

It is said that Lépine was unhappy in the U.S., worrying about the welfare of his family. This led him to return home in May 1873. In September that same year, he was arrested and charged with the murder of Scott. In November 1874, he was convicted and sentenced to death. The conviction and sentencing drew great excitement and outrage in the Red River Settlement and the rest of Canada.

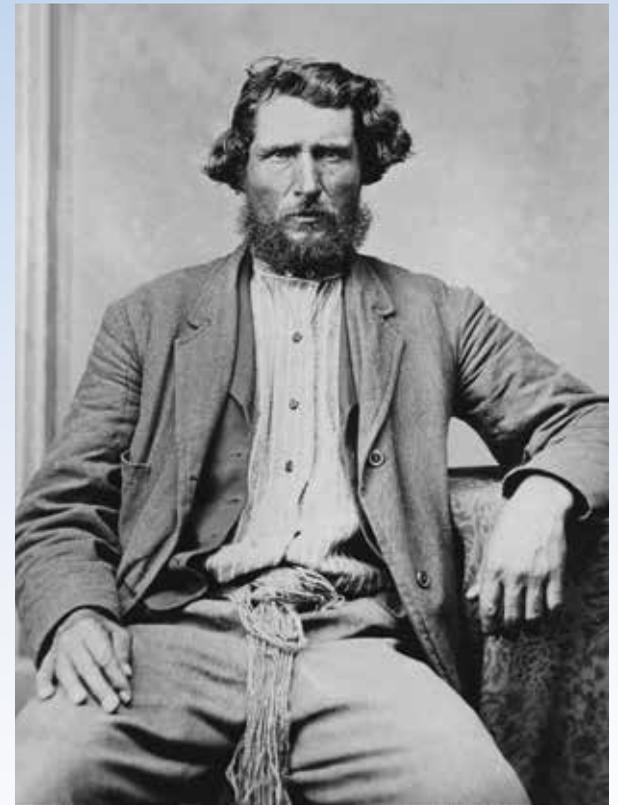
The federal Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie turned the matter over to the governor general of Canada, Lord Dufferin. Dufferin eventually decided that Lépine's sentence should be commuted to two years in prison along with the forfeiture of his civil rights. A few months later, in April 1875, both Lépine and Riel were offered amnesty on the

condition that they accept a five-year banishment from Canada. Unlike Riel, Lépine refused the offer and chose to serve the remainder of his sentence.

After his release from prison on October 26, 1876, Lépine maintained close contact with Riel and Taché. He remained active in Manitoba's French-speaking community and was elected vice-president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste in 1878. The following year, he travelled to Montana to meet with Riel who tried recruiting him for a project uniting the Métis and Indians of the northwest into a confederacy. Even though he spent the winter with the Métis of the region, Lépine took the advice of Taché who was worried about trouble in the northwest. Lépine left before seeing Riel. This instance and siding with Taché seems to have been a turning point for Lépine. He stayed out of Métis politics after this and chose not to become involved in the 1884-1885 Rebellion.

Lépine faced hard times in the late 1800s. His farm burned down and poor harvests left his family almost penniless. He and his wife moved close to Forget, SK and lived there until his wife's passing in 1908. Lépine was involved with helping to establish the historical committee of the Union Nationale Métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba in 1909.

Shortly before his death, Lépine had his civil rights restored and he moved back to St. Boniface. He died



Undated photo of Ambroise-Didyme Lépine.

at the St. Boniface Hospital on June 8, 1923, and is buried in the St. Boniface Cemetery next to Riel. He is commemorated by Lepine Avenue in Winnipeg and a plaque near the Upper Fort Garry Gate.



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Neah Kee Papa Program Starts Anew

A new face has joined the Metis Community Liaison Department to run the Neah Kee Papa Program. Stefan Richard Gislason joined the team on Jan. 4 and is eager to get the program up and running once more.

"There's not a lot of programming for men, specifically Indigenous and Metis fathers," said Richard Gislason, a father himself. "I hope to focus on the reunification and strengthening of bonds between parents and children."

The Neah Kee Papa program is designed to support the well-being of children and to encourage and promote the parenting role of fathers. It includes sessions on getting started, father's role, proactive parenting, life skills, health & sexuality, your family & the law, effective communication, job readiness and family of origin. All participants who complete the eight-session program receive a certificate of completion.

The program itself isn't new. It's been offered since 1999 to fathers from all walks of life. Richard Gislason hopes to bring the program to the community once more.



Successful Neah Kee Papa 2011 program participants. (File photo)

"For now I'm updating and redoing parts of the programming," said Richard Gislason. "The framework will remain the same but I hope to make it more culturally appropriate."

For more information or to register for the program, contact the Metis Community Liaison Department at (204) 586-8474 or toll-free at 1-800-665-8574.

Metis

Employment & Training

Who can participate?

You may be eligible for our employment & training programs and services if you are:

- A Metis, Non-Status or Inuit individual and are a resident of Manitoba.
- Have barriers to employment that prevent you from securing long-term employment.
- Unemployed, under-employed or at risk of losing your job and actively seeking employment.

However, job search support assistance is available to anyone requiring assistance.

Services Available

- Employment/Career Counseling.
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- Referrals to employers for direct employment opportunities.

Contact us at **204-586-8474** or visit www.mmfemployment.ca



**Metis
Employment
& Training**

Métis Entrepreneur Purchases Manitoba Flagship Restaurant Chain

Manitoba's restaurant icon is now Métis-owned and operated. Salisbury House was recently purchased by Métis entrepreneur Noel Bernier and his partners David Filmon and the Metis Economic Development Fund (MEDF).

Bernier is a restaurateur who also owns Hermanos, Barley Brothers and Prairie 360 and has started several other restaurant concepts in the last 10 years. The process of purchasing the 87-year old restaurant chain took over two years for Bernier.

"Noel and his team are well positioned to take Salisbury House to its 100th anniversary and beyond as Manitoba's family restaurant," said Earl Barish, who owned the chain since 2000.

Rounding out the new executive team will be senior managers Brad Kramble (VP operations) and Renan Pires (controller) along with entrepreneur Justin Giasson (VP rural growth) and Indigenous activist and education leader Rebecca Chartrand (special advisor — community relations).

MEDF worked with Noel and the other partners for over a year to ensure that Salisbury House remained a truly Manitoba-owned company. "Our involvement was to support Noel Bernier," says John Coutris, CEO of MEDF. "It was too large for Noel to do on his own. We wanted to ensure it was a Métis majority-owned company."

MEDF is an equity investment fund intended to stimulate economic development activities of the Métis people throughout Manitoba by providing equity and capital for Métis entrepreneurs and businesses to support economic development initiatives. As a non-profit, self-sustaining entity, all revenue generated by the fund will be reinvested back into the fund to grow its supply of capital for investment in other Métis-owned enterprises.

Bernier will be a keynote speaker at the Metis Business Conference on Feb. 6, 2018 in Brandon Manitoba. The conference is hosted by MEDF and the Louis Riel Capital Corporation.

Helping Metis Business Succeed!

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