



# Le Métis



July is our month to fully embrace all that summer has to offer. It is also the provincial government's opportunity to accept the olive branch that is being handed to them.

As has been reported in the media recently, the federal government was forced to delay the approval of the 213-kilometre Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Project (MMTP) line when they recognized that the Pallister government didn't properly consult with Indigenous communities.

This delay was a powerful statement. The reaction from our province was blame. Blame launched at the federal government, and more blame directed toward the Hydro Board. But now the smoke has cleared. A decision has been made. Ottawa approved the project, but with some very straightforward conditions.

One of the 28 National Energy Board license conditions make it clear that Manitoba Hydro must honour its commitments to Indigenous Peoples and the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). That includes our \$67.5-million reconciliation and accommodation agreement that had been improperly discarded by the Pallister government. The agreement we have had to fight the Pallister government to reinstate. It is regrettable that we've been forced into conflict. But conflict can result in progress.

Here is an opportunity for Pallister. This is his moment to embrace true reconciliation. Now Ottawa has weighed in and further validated our position, Pallister can acknowledge the Constitutionally Guaranteed Rights of the Citizens of the Métis Nation, the Founders of Manitoba,

## President's Message

and show us that he hears our collective voice. His action must now be to reinstate our agreement, so the plan can go forward and meet its timeline. This will be to everyone's advantage. The \$453-million transmission project benefits every single citizen of Manitoba, helps to fight climate change and transition to a lower carbon economy. If he does not reinstate the Agreement, then we will continue to protect our rights through the courts.

If there is no progress on the MMTP, there will be no one to blame but Pallister.

The very definition of strong leadership, leadership that has resulted in recognition and justice, was recently confirmed in Ottawa with the Crown-Métis Nation Summit. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was presented with the Order of the Métis Nation, our highest award to acknowledge those who have made a significant contribution to the Métis. His contributions have been positive and real ones.

A recent action is the \$30-million Métis Veterans Recognition Payment Contribution Agreement I recently signed in Ottawa along with Veterans Affairs Minister, Lawrence MacAulay. Money is being paid out to Métis Veterans and their survivors. I had the honour of presenting a payment to Saskatchewan native and Second World War Veteran Paul DeLorme, who now resides in England. A trust fund will also be set up for families. I am thankful the bravery and sacrifice of the Métis People are finally being recognized. We are now righting past wrongs. There are few Métis Veterans still alive and I will meet with these heroes personally to thank them and deliver their cheques. The remaining funds will be allocated after careful consultation with veterans, families and community.

This is a strong demonstration of how our relationship with Ottawa is Reconciliation in Action. Not empty words, but active working to respect our Métis government, our rights, claims and interests and the many unique challenges, such as veteran's rights, jobs, housing and post-secondary education. Your MMF government is dedicated to reclaiming our rightful place in Confederation.

Next year is the landmark 150 years since the Métis Nation joined Canada. The Métis Nation's Manitoba Métis Community is Canada's Negotiating Partner in Confederation and the Founder of Manitoba. We have been working with Canada on a number of initiatives to celebrate our important 2020 anniversary. We invite all levels of government to join us as our Métis Nation marks Manitoba's birthday.

We always hold close to our hearts the contributions of our Elders, who are the keepers of our history and our values. Recently the MMF attended the annual Keeping the Fires Burning event hosted by Ka Ni Kanichihk and the sakihiwewin Foundation, and welcomed nine elders into the Circle of Honour. I want to congratulate Eldon Campbell on his recognition as our Métis Elder at the ceremony. I also want to thank Minister Anita Campbell for attending on my behalf.

The strength of our Elders inspires us to be strong.

I invite everyone to Ste. Madeleine Métis Days, July 19-21. This is the 80th anniversary since the forced relocation of the people of Ste. Madeleine. We will mark the occasion by coming together in the spirit of community with entertainment, games, dancing, fiddling, kid's activities, a historical tour, and much, much more. There will be free camping for your enjoyment! I would like to thank the Ste. Madeleine local executive and volunteers for their hard work making this event a reality.

The Ste. Madeleine story is a firm reminder of why we fight so hard against injustice. The tragedy happened not so very long ago. That is why we gather together to celebrate acts of reconciliation, and why we must always be vigilant and strive to protect our Métis Families and ensure future generations, remember our past.

Finally, please keep in your thoughts and prayers, members of our community who are experiencing illness or have recently lost a loved one. I pray for your continued strength in trying times.

Meeqwetch,

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

# Lifelong Métis Fiddler Honoured at Keeping the Fires Burning

Métis fiddler Eldon Campbell was recently inducted as an honoured grandfather at the 18th Annual Keeping the Fires Burning ceremony in Winnipeg on June 13. Each year, the event celebrates Indigenous Elders who have made significant contributions to their communities by safeguarding Indigenous culture, knowledge, and traditions.

Campbell has played the fiddle for 61 years, having the love of music instilled in him from a young age by his parents, Malcolm and Harriet Campbell. His mother bought him his first fiddle for \$9.95, ordering it from the Eaton's catalogue and having it mailed to their home in the Métis community of Kinosota.

"We used to have a few house parties, and we called them dances because my dad would take all the furniture out and made benches for along the wall. Dancing and fiddling was the main thing," said Campbell. "After one of the dances, I remember them laughing at me because I was sitting in the corner pretending to play the fiddle for Uncle Willy who had played that night. I would have been about six or seven, I guess."

The first tune he learned to play was "Don't Be Cruel" by Elvis Presley back in the late 1950s.

From his humble beginnings, Eldon Campbell has gone on to play fiddle at countless events, including dances, cultural celebrations, Elders' gatherings, and the Manitoba Metis Federation's (MMF) Annual General Assembly.

Recently, Campbell and one of his granddaughters traveled to Ottawa to perform at a federal government meeting with the Métis Nation.

Campbell has been married to his wife Audrey Campbell for 47 years, and he has passed on his love of music to his three children and nine grandchildren. Many of them have become talented singers and musicians through his guidance.

In addition to passing along his knowledge to his family, Eldon Campbell has also been teaching adults and youth how to play the fiddle for approximately 17 years. With funding from the MMF, he was previously able to start up a fiddling program for youth in his community. He believes in the importance of passing on his knowledge and love of Métis music and dance, and that music is a great way for young people to spend their time.

"The entertainment today is different. At that time, that was our entertainment, you know, playing music and dancing and stuff like that," said Campbell. "Kids have different things to do now, so the more I can see them playing the fiddle, the better I like it."

Nine Indigenous Elders were inducted this year at the Keeping the Fires Burning ceremony, with nominations coming from the MMF, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc., Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, and more.

MMF Minister Anita Campbell honoured Métis Elder Eldon Campbell at the ceremony, presenting him with a beautiful, handmade blanket and an eagle feather.

"I am so humbled and honored to be here to present this acknowledgement. Eldon, we're not related but I call him my uncle," said Minister Campbell.

Wrapped in his new blanket with eagle feather in hand, Eldon Campbell addressed the crowd of 900 people to give his thanks.

"It's hard to express the way I feel about it," said Eldon Campbell. "It is an honour to be honoured for doing something I really enjoy, and if in some small way I've helped a young person to do something great, I'm happy."



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## 203rd Anniversary of the Victory at Frog Plain

On June 19, 2019, marking the 203rd anniversary of the Victory at Frog Plain, Manitoba Metis Federation Minister Will Goodon met history on its own turf. The sun was just beginning to heat up as he walked through the cemetery in St. Francois Xavier, formerly known as Grantown.

“It’s my understanding that Cuthbert Grant, Jr., the First Leader of the Métis Nation, was buried under the altar of a chapel that burnt down, and his remains were lost. Then they built this church. So, the community sees the entire church as a marker for where he lies. It’s a very beautiful, symbolic idea.”

Eugene Bernardin made the quick drive from home to unlock the church and walk us through. He tells tales about the challenges the historic building endured, including recent vandalism. In response to the incident, the community rallied. A fundraiser to repair the damage has already sold out.

“It’s a tight-knit community,” says Minister Goodon. “And even though it was 203 years ago, la Victoire de la Grenouillère was also all about compatriots.”

La Victoire was the boiling over of a rivalry between the Hudson’s Bay Company and North West Company, intensified by the Pemmican Proclamation of 1814 which forbade the Métis access to food that they relied on. Cuthbert Grant, Jr., and his men defied the order.

“We don’t back down when we know it’s right,” says Minister Goodon. “Cuthbert Grant had compatriots who would travel around with

him. They traded, they hunted, they trapped. These were young guys – a crew – and when the battle happened, those fellows had not been sitting behind desks. They knew how to handle themselves. It was a decisive victory. But chiefly, it was the first time we went into battle as a people. Cuthbert Grant, Jr., declared ‘the New Nation’. He flew our flag for the first time after the battle. It became the rallying point for the Métis people to have a new consciousness. This is what we recognize every year. Louis Riel is obviously key. I also think it’s vital to recognize the folks who helped to start the idea of the Métis Nation.”

We stop at Grant’s Old Mill, watch wheat turn to flour, and our picture of political leader Cuthbert Grant, Jr., expands to include “businessman”.

“I’m a descendant, related to Grant through one of his sisters. And in a way he reminds me of my dad who still is a businessman. My dad did a lot of things as well, from trapping to sawmill to construction, to running small motels. He’s 86 years old and he still goes out trapping,” Minister Goodon says with a smile.

By noon the sun is hot at the obelisk monument at Main Street and Rupertsland Boulevard, the approximate centre of the battle site. The crowd is tapping their feet to fiddle music. People embrace, talk. The history of the Métis seems incredibly relevant.

“We will always stand up for the rights of our people, and that is very evident in how the Métis Government is handling itself today. It’s all about compatriots.”



## 14th Annual Indigenous Day in Selkirk

Sailing through Selkirk, Manitoba, on a wave of billowing blue and white Métis flags, the 14th Annual Indigenous Day festival is welcoming from the start.

“The patterns on the sashes all tell a story, and they’re all unique,” Teresa Byrne explains as she demonstrates the raising and lowering of the threads and guides the shuttle through. As she weaves, it is a marvel that she can make sense of so many different strands that result in such a beautiful pattern. She has a gift for her task. She instructs children and adults in the basics of finger weaving at a nearby table. They all sit together twisting coloured threads into simple, delightful designs.

This is but one stop of many in Selkirk Park on the first day of summer. It’s hot but not sweltering, the bright blue sky graced by shapely clouds. Tables fill up as attendees devour a free pancake breakfast, coffee and juice. The day is just beginning. Laughter peals through the park as children race and play games and are thrilled by adorable critters at the petting zoo. Over 100 volunteers are out, and the bustling event runs seamlessly.

“My favourite animal to carve might be the polar bear,” says Frank Orvis. He sits behind his booth selling carved talking sticks, pipes, painted rocks, and carved animals. He smiles widely as his most popular item, a talking stick, is sold.

Each vendor is as pleased to share their offerings and has a good story to tell. A group of St. Laurent Elders, crafty seamstresses marketing a host of embroidered wool items, also sell their co-authored book that teach Michif French. These delightful and accomplished women also offer in-person Michif lessons.

There is the pleasant sound of chatter as the venue swells with attendees, and people buying, selling, and socializing.

At noon the opening ceremonies begin, with opening remarks from the Mayor of Selkirk Larry Johannson, City of Selkirk Councillor April Hourie, and Manitoba Metis Federation Ministers Jack Park, Mona Buors, Anita Campbell, and Alfred “Buck” Anderson. President David Chartrand’s address is a captivating tribute to Paul DeLorme, a Métis hero of the Second World War, whom Chartrand recently thanked in person while

delivering compensation for his service as a Veteran. Under the recently negotiated Métis Veterans Recognition Payment Contribution Agreement, only now are these individuals receiving the recognition they so richly deserve. President Chartrand emphasized his commitment and pride in negotiating for Métis rights.

Volunteers, sponsors and the City of Selkirk warmly recognized, President Chartrand ushers in the entertainment segment of the day. A crowded audience is delighted by musicians, fiddling, and jiggging. The throng quickly lines up for free lunch of delicious barbecued food, and the volunteers quickly and efficiently keep the long line moving steadily.

Like a Métis sash, the day is woven of many strands, with each person – organizer, vendor, volunteer, entertainer, dignitary, and attendee – bringing his and her own special strand that weaves together to make the 14th Annual Indigenous Day festival a celebration of Métis pride, and a tremendous success.



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