

President's Message

March 24, 2014

For two centuries, our Metis Nation governance has followed fundamental democratic principles. These principles have directed leadership decision-making and action-taking since the time of the great prairie buffalo hunts. Today these principles are embodied in the texts of our modern Metis Government Constitutions. The Directors of the MMF Board and myself take this seriously and are vigilant to ensure responsible and accountable Metis governance cross our province and nation.

Recently there has been some media coverage in the news this past week in which the journalist made it appear there is internal division within the Metis Nation. There is no internal division of the Nation. The Metis People are strong. But there are three Presidents (Dumont of Metis Nation British Columbia; Poitras of Metis Nation Alberta; and, Lipinski of Metis Nation Ontario), who, for their own personal reasons and political ambitions, support the undemocratic, unaccountable, and illegal actions of the rogue Metis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS) President Robert Doucette.

Why is the MNS President running wild? The context is that it is the Metis National Council (MNC) election time for the MNC President position. The MNC election uses a delegate system for voting for the President. There are 55 delegates who vote. These delegates include 15 from the MNS Board of Directors, also called the Provincial Metis Council. MNS President Doucette attempted to remove 12 MNS delegates who do not agree with his ideas and methods, and who would be likely to vote in a way that he could not control at the MNC Presidential election.

When Doucette attempted his coup to remove his Provincial Metis Council members, the MMF Board, and myself as MMF President and as MNC Vice-President, took the necessary steps to protect MNC democracy at the national level. Back in Saskatchewan, MNS Vice-President and MNS-designate to the MNC Board of Governors, Mr. Gerald Morin, along with the other 11 MNS Provincial Metis Council members, went to the Court to protect MNS democracy and the voice of the Metis in Saskatchewan.

This past week, the Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan ruled in favour of Vice President Morin. Doucette's attempt to remove the 12 democratically elected members - the majority - of the Provincial Metis Council, has failed. The Court ruled that Doucette's actions were irregular, prejudice, and an illegal attempt to strip Morin and his colleagues from their elected office, and rewrite the MNS Constitution. The Judge ruled the Special Meeting and Assembly that Doucette called to remove Morin and his colleagues were not constitutional. There was a complete failure by Doucette to follow the governing rules.

There will be justice. But this is not the first time this has played out. In 1994 I stated that the MNC is not a Presidents' Club. The President's cannot choose the MNC delegates. These delegates must be fully and properly elected Board Members from the 5 Metis Governments. But back in 2007-2008 MNA President Poitras attempted a coup and tried to remove 8 members of her Board whose vote she couldn't control. Thankfully these

shameful acts were brought to an end before any more damage to the democratic rights of the Metis in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and before the impacts crippled the MNC and the democratic rights of Metis across the Homeland.

The governance vacuum created by the MNS President Doucette prevented the MNC from holding General Assembly and its Presidential elections. Last week's Saskatchewan Court decision will now allow the MNC General Assembly and MNC President election to take place. Both current MNC President Clement Chartier and myself had made it clear that the election would occur after the Saskatchewan issues were sorted out. The Court decision validates and rewards the hard work and determination of all those who protected the democracy of the Metis in Saskatchewan and across the Metis Homeland.

The undemocratic and illegal activity by MNS President Robert Doucette, and supported by Dumont, Poitras, and Lipinski, has harsh impacts our image as People. In the media all the Metis are painted with the same brush. Some say it is infighting. But it is about taking a stand: right against wrong. A President abusing democratic rights and overriding the constitution is unacceptable. When this is attempted, as MNS President Doucette has recently failed to do, it is a backwards step into autocracy and dictatorship. This is wrong.

I want to quote the very clear words the Saskatchewan Judge wrote in his decision: "[...] it is important for all parties to honour their Constitution and follow the directions set out in the Constitution." This is easy to understand. The MMF will continue to protect our Constitutions and our People's right to responsible and accountable self-government. It is important that we defend the democracy of our Ancestors for our Citizens today and tomorrow. Our government belongs to our People and our Nation. Together we stand, united, and strong.

Meeqwetch.