

President's Message

May 20, 2014

May 17, 2014 was the closing of nominations for the candidacy of President in the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) 2014 Presidential election. I am both proud and humbled to be able to say that I am honoured to be the only candidate nominated. The Chief Electoral Office notified me that I stood alone without any opposition to run against me. Being the five-term incumbent, this was a very personal and heartfelt moment. Having your continuing confidence means a lot to me.

We are all entering into a historic time for the Manitoba Metis Community. It is clear our record of accomplishments cannot be ignored and our vision for the future is our rallying cry. We have gained so much and yet face so many struggles. It is clear that with no challenger brought forward, you, our Metis Citizens, gave strong testimony of your conviction and support, and you are united behind your Metis Government.

As your Leader, I am prepared to begin my sixth term as MMF President. Although I will not be on my own personal campaign trail during the coming weeks, I will be following the Regional Vice President and Director candidates, hearing their speeches and listening carefully to your questions and comments on the issues, your needs and your aspirations. You will see me at upcoming community events, as I do throughout the year, promoting the hard work and accomplishments by our team.

Your certainty in your Metis Government gives us strength and resolve. I want to say again, as I have said many times before, that the MMF Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers are hardworking and committed. I again thank them for their dedication. As a team we have carefully listened to, and will continue to listen to, and act on the needs and aspirations of our People.

In 1996 I was appointed as MMF spokesperson. In 1997 I ran for and won the position of President. My team's mandate to lead the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community has now run without interruption for nearly twenty years. Among our accomplishments we have won our MMF Land Claim in the Supreme Court, gained recognition for our harvesting rights, put in place education funds for our students, developed our economic and business corporations, and brought benefits to our Elders such as our new vision care program.

As we set to work in this new term, we will keep our sleeves rolled up and fix new problems as they come up and address the existing issues. We will continue to walk the walk. We will not accept anyone, including the Manitoba Government and Hydro ignoring Metis rights. Manitoba can't say they don't need to consult or include us because we are "on the lower end of the spectrum. The Premier cannot show this disrespect. He would never try to say this to other Nations or Peoples. We will not let this affront go unchallenged. We will not roll over. We will stand together. We

will ensure the accomplishments of our Ancestors are respected and the future of our children and grandchildren are protected.

I thank the Metis People for our renewed mandate. You, the Metis People, have stood by us during these times of struggle and times of success. Remaining united we will hold the Manitoba Government, and others, accountable. We will make sure that others such as Canada and Manitoba, and Manitoba Hydro and other proponents and developers, do not attempt to either ignore or try to take advantage of the Metis People here in Manitoba.

Yes, the Metis People and your Metis Government have accomplished many things that could only be dreamt about thirty years ago. The Late Senator Ed Head often spoke of this. He could see what had been done. Indeed, much has been completed over the past decade, yet I am confident this is just the beginning. I say we are just getting started. Over the next four years we will reach many more of our objectives. We will enter into new frontiers and aim for new stars.

Again, I want to thank each and every one of you, the MMF Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and our Metis Citizens, our Elders and Youth, for your unmatched and unanimous support.

Meeqwetch.