

President's Message

June 2, 2014

The MMF is in the middle of its 2014 province-wide elections. Earlier this week, the MMF Chief Electoral Officer posted the final list of candidates. I wish to congratulate those MMF board members who have been re-elected by acclamation and those new members who will be at the table for the first time. I also would like to thank all those who have put their name forward as a candidate for the elections. I suggest you check out the MMF Chief Electoral Office website for the Candidate List and June 26, 2014 election day information.

By acclamation I have been elected MMF President for a sixth term. It is both an honour and a privilege to serve the Metis People as your President. For those who were recently named a member of the MMF Board also by acclamation, I know they feel the same way. As the elected representatives of the self-government and voice of the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community, we have the responsibility to uphold our MMF Constitution and to advocate on your behalf.

Over the past four-year term, your MMF Board has accomplished many things that would have not have been thought possible thirty, or even ten or twenty, years ago. Among the many accomplishments, we have our child and family services authority and agencies in place, increased our health department initiatives, enlarged the Louis Riel endowment fund for student support, and developed our business arm with the Metis Economic Development Organization (MEDO) and Metis Economic Development Fund (MEDF) in addition to our long-time success Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC).

The Metis People sent a clear signal that they are pleased with the advocacy work that has been done over the past four-year term. Of truly historical significance, together, we brought our MMF Land Claim to the Supreme Court of Canada. On March 8th, 2013, after 32 years of legal battle by your leadership, the Supreme Court recognized the truth of our Metis history and vindicated our people's 143-year-old struggle for justice. This could only have been done with your full support and the active participation of the MMF Board of Directors.

In this historic decision, the highest court in the land reaffirmed that Section 31 of the 1870 *Manitoba Act* was to set aside 1.4 million acres of land for 7,000 Metis children. This constitutional obligation was to give the Metis children a head start. But the Metis were marginalized. This agreement was frustrated and the Court held that this solemn promise was not implemented "in accordance with the honour of the Crown." On another matter, we recently won at the Federal Court of Appeal as an intervenor in the Daniels Decision to protect our rights under 91(24) of the Constitution. We argued successfully and the Court used our recommendations in their decision.

Our next steps forward in fulfilling the dreams of our Ancestors must now be to renew the partnership between the Metis and other Canadians with meaningful reconciliation and mutual respect. We move this forward as a result of both our Land Claim Decision and the Daniels Decision. Over this coming term we will continue to take these next steps. As we set to work in this new term, we will keep our sleeves rolled up and move on this as well as fix new problems as they come up and address the existing grievances and issues.

I offer a reminder that the MMF election will take place on June 26th, 2014. I wish the best of luck to all our candidates. I will be on the campaign trail to support the good work our MMF Board has done. As I wrote in an earlier President's Message, 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 continue to see me at upcoming community events, as I do throughout the year, promoting the hard work and accomplishments by our MMF team.

I look forward to seeing you on the campaign trail. As a Metis Citizen, it is your right to vote. Your continuing support of your Metis Government, including on Election Day, gives both our People and your leadership strength and resolve, as they say, to move mountains. I 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 will work hard to meet the needs and aspirations of our People.

Meeqwetch.