

## **President's Message**

### **July 7, 2014**

Canada Day was celebrated this past week. This holiday is a time to be with family, friends, and community, and to remember a great past and to aspire to a greater future. In building Canada, our Metis Ancestors and our Metis Veterans fought and defended the principles of democracy and our freedoms. It is with humbleness and respect that we thank them for their sacrifices and those of their families. Without taking a stand in what they believed was right, the country that we live in today would surely be a different place.

The Metis are Canada's Negotiating Partners in Confederation and the Founders of Manitoba. Louis Riel is considered a Father of Manitoba. This has not been without struggles. To protect our identity and our rights as a Founding People and as one of the three Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, the Metis have fought on the battlefields, in Parliament and the Legislature, and in the courts of law and public opinion. Today we continue to assert our rights and identity, seek reconciliation for past injustices, while building a strong future for our children and grandchildren.

For generations the Metis have believed in the importance of democracy, and civic and human rights, and valued, indeed continue to value, their critical importance. Louis Riel stood on the surveyor's chain, and, with other Metis leaders, protected Metis families and lands from the illegal advance of Canada. With negotiation and agreement, the Manitoba Act was passed by Canada and ratified by the Metis. Later, Riel and others also stood strong at Batoche. This month, in Saskatchewan, are the "Back to Batoche" festivities to remember the sacrifices and to celebrate the lives of our patriots.

Democracy and Self-Government are important to the Metis. This past week the final results were made in the Manitoba Metis Federation 2014 elections. I congratulate all the successful candidates on their win. It will be an honour to work with each of them over the next four years. Soon, as a first step in this new journey together, we will be holding our traditional swearing in ceremony for your elected representatives. Then we will roll up our sleeves and take care of business. I want to thank all our candidates and volunteers, and the chief electoral office, for their hard work leading to the success of this election.

We have done so much in past years and we have so much more to do. We will fight for our rights and ensure we do not again become "the forgotten people." Leader and activist Malcolm Norris, once referring to the treatment of Metis, said "to be ignored is more vicious perhaps than to be oppressed." Our Ancestors made great sacrifices in founding Manitoba and building and defending Canada. Despite their struggles, hard work, dedication, and love of country, Metis contributions are not fully recognized nor the wrongs committed against the Metis fully acknowledged. Over the next term, together, we will ensure this does continue.

There is a lot going on this summer. I have already mentioned Batoche. There are also the events at the Riel House in St-Vital. Of particular interest to me, and I know for many of you, are the many Metis summer events put on by our Manitoba Metis Federation Locals and community members to celebrate our culture, our history, and our nationhood. To keep up with the announcements about Metis events and news, please be sure to listen to our Metis Hour x 2 on NCI Radio, read our Le Metis here in the Grassroots News, and check out the MMF website. There is a lot happening in the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community this summer. Don't miss it.

Again, I want to thank all our volunteers, staff, and elected representatives in the Regions and Locals for all their hard work and commitment needed to protect our Metis Rights and Identity, support our Metis Government, and showcase our Metis Culture. Our Ancestor's and Veterans contributions were important to building the Canada we live in today. Our contributions are critical to building the Canada in which our children and grandchildren will live tomorrow.

Have a great summer!

Meeqwetch.