

President's Message

August 25, 2014

This past weekend your MMF Ministers and senior staff met in Russell, Manitoba for our regular MMF Board of Directors meeting. As you know, we have recently come through our MMF elections and we have a number of new Ministers who will now begin their first term. The majority around the table are veterans who will be able to act as mentors and provide their stability, experience, and wisdom.

As the MMF President, I have the responsibility to appoint the Ministerial portfolios that are then ratified by the Board of Directors. Prior to this Board meeting, I carefully considered the skills and experience of our Ministers and the portfolio requirements and determined what I believe are a good match for each. This weekend they received their appointments.

Making and accepting the Ministerial appointments are heavy responsibilities towards ensuring our rights and interests are protected and that the needed services and programs are developed and available to our Metis Citizens. An important goal that all the Ministers share in their portfolios is to ensure their departments, and indeed the MMF family of which they are a part, are sustainable and self-reliant. We are not fully there yet, but we are moving in that direction.

As I stated in my preamble to the appointments, in just under 50 years, the MMF has evolved from an advocacy organization in 1967 to the Metis Government of the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community of today. The MMF continues to grow and strengthen with each success in our struggles in the political arena and in the courts of justice. With the recent wins in the Supreme Court of Canada in our Land Claim and the Federal Court of Appeal Daniels Decision we have become stronger.

Despite this strength, or maybe because of it, governments have become fearful and we anticipate that MMF will be facing challenges over the coming years with Canadian governments refusing to face their financial obligations and constitutional responsibilities to the Metis. The Metis are taxpayers. We pay billions in taxes yet do not receive our share of tax based funding in return. We cannot rely on government funding. We are in the midst of restructuring for effectiveness, efficiency and profitability. We will be sustainable and self-reliant.

Strategic planning to enhance programs and services is an important step. Teamwork is essential. It is with this in mind that the mandate of every MMF Minister will include developing growth strategies, both short term and long term, towards financial independence and to assist the MMF government in protecting the rights and meeting the aspirations of our Metis Citizens. The appointments this weekend established a new Cabinet Team to lead us through the challenges towards meeting our goals.

I'd like to remind everyone of our upcoming 2014 Annual General Assembly in Brandon on September 27th and 28th. There you will have the opportunity to be introduced to your new Cabinet Team. I look forward to seeing you all there.

I offer my prayers and condolences to those who have lost a loved one. My hopes to those who are sick or shut in. Best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch.