

Le Metis President's Message

The Métis are Canada's Negotiating Partners in Confederation and the Founders of Manitoba. Yet our founding partnership has not been without struggles. To protect our rights as citizens, hardworking taxpayers, and as an Aboriginal People, we have fought on the battlefields, in Parliament and the Legislature, and in the courts of law and public opinion. Democracy, self-determination, and Self-Government are important to the Métis.

We take our right to govern ourselves and determine our future very seriously. The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is your democratically elected Métis self-government representative. As your representative, we understand the importance of grassroots empowerment. Empowerment means to gain power. An individual by him or herself may not seem very powerful, but united with others we can make change.

As a group of thousands we have great power when focused on an issue or direction. This power can influence the decisions of any government. It's about choice. By putting your "X" on the ballot, the Métis can influence the outcome of an election. Through the ballot box, we can send a strong message to all politicians that the Métis cannot be ignored. To a party disrespecting the Métis, or not keeping a promise, an electoral loss can be a hard lesson.

Candidates may lose or win by only a few dozen votes. These ridings can be key to which party becomes the government. In analyzing the results of an election, poll by poll, the federal political parties know who votes, and can figure out what they can promise and what they can or cannot get away with. Before, during, and after an election, they look at the issues and voters' reactions, and how these change election results. With this information they develop campaign platforms and government policies.

Again, we, the Métis are hardworking taxpayers. We contribute to the building of our country's infrastructure, programs and services. Governments are not giving us anything for free. We have worked hard and paid for these government expenditures. No matter where we live there are no problems with the tax collector finding us. Unfortunately, when it comes to getting those taxes back as programs and services we do not get our fair share for our priority needs.

Knowing we will come out and vote on the issues that are important to us will change election results and the way parties and governments deal with us. We can influence decisions regarding programs and services such as making the ASETS program permanent, and other important actions such in negotiating the MMF Land Claim. When you vote, it gives both our People and your Leadership the strength, as they say, to move mountains.

The 2015 Canadian federal election, also formally known as the 42nd Canadian general election, will be held on October 19, 2015 to elect members to the House of Commons of the 42nd Parliament of Canada. This is less than 2 months away and

things are starting to heat up in the media. People are talking about what they read in the news about what major federal party leaders are saying, and what they hear from their local candidates as they go door to door.

In preparing to vote we believe information is critical. What are the campaign platforms of each of the major federal parties? What impacts will these have on the Métis? Are there Métis specific commitments? To get answers to these, the MMF on behalf of our Métis Citizens has asked nine Métis-specific questions concerning what their party will do if forming the government, or as the opposition holding the balance of power, after the 2015 federal election.

In letters to the party leadership we enclosed the questions and respectfully requested their answers be received at my office on or before Friday September 18, 2015 so that we may have adequate time for review and distribute their responses to you, our citizens, well before the federal election. We will be sending emails to our citizens and putting the questions and answers on the MMF website, and looking at other ways to get this information to you before you vote.

These questions concern education and training, employment, procurement and other business opportunities, health, Métis residential and day schools, and our land claim. I suggest you check out our MMF website at www.mmf.mb.ca/elections.php and review the background and questions. When we get the answers they will also be posted on our website. Remember these are questions that you can also ask the candidates and their staff and volunteers in your riding.

Again, I cannot over emphasize the importance to you, your families, and your community to learn more about the federal political parties' election platforms regarding the Métis people. What have they promised to do and not do? Have they kept their promises? Remember what has been their track record in our Métis community when you step into that voting booth, and remember that you have the power.

Upon closing, I offer my prayers for our friends, family members, and veterans who have passed on and my condolences to those who have lost a loved one. My hopes are with those who are sick or shut in and I offer my best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch,