

## ***President's Message***

September 29, 2016

This summer the MMF undertook Land Claims consultation meetings. During the meetings we provided a history of the legal and policy summaries of the Supreme Court of Canada's 2016 Daniels decision and the Court's 2013 MMF v Canada decision – also known as our Land Claim Decision. We reported on the current status of discussions with Canada on our Land Claim and undertook question and answer sessions.

Our Citizens also suggested and discussed lots of good ideas on what they thought might be future negotiation topics and what kinds of initiatives might be done and supported under the future trust to be set up for the responsible benefit for today and for future generations of our children.

The top initiative repeated from meeting to meeting was education for our children and grandchildren and beyond. This was followed by a great variety of thoughts such as retirement homes, medication and supports for Elders, assistance for down payment on a house for first time homebuyers, bonding and equipment to assist our people's businesses, and other initiatives. I thank our Métis people for their ideas and their farsighted vision.

The MMF consultation meetings wrapped up with visits to Mafeking, The Pas, and Flin Flon the week of September 12. There were MMF local executive representatives and Métis at these and other locations from across the Region and from across the province.

I want to thank The Pas Regional, Vice President and Directors, office staff and Local volunteers, for their participation, coordination, and hard work in making these consultations a success. Indeed I thank the Vice Presidents, Directors, staff and volunteers of all the Regions that we visited during the summer. We travelled across the province from Winnipeg to Churchill and from Roblin to Lorette, and many places in between.

During our meetings many of our Métis Citizens asked about the MEDOCare Pharmacy and our eyeglass program. When our Citizens get their medications from our pharmacy the profits made go to our eyeglass program for our Elders. This has been such a growing success that our Elders and their families are now asking about an initiative to assist in getting hearing aids. As our pharmacy grows with new clients we will be able to consider this and other programs and services paid for by the benefits of having our own pharmacy.

Each of us has economic power through our purchases. Every dollar is equal and has the ability to change our world. If your dollar is spent at a competing pharmacy, you may get a smile from behind the counter but the profit goes to shareholders elsewhere in Canada or around the world. When you buy at our pharmacy, the profits stay home and come back to our community through our own initiatives.

This past Friday, September 23rd at the beginning of our Annual General Assembly (AGA), we undertook a special workshop about our Land Claim. I was pleased to see so many of our Métis Citizens there. We are in an exciting time and I look forward to

announcements about our Claim over the coming weeks and months. I was also pleased to see some many of our Métis Citizens – especially our Elders and Youth – at this past weekend’s AGA that took place at Assiniboia Downs, on the Saturday and the Sunday, September 24th and 25th.

Our assemblies are an integral part of our Manitoba Métis Government. These important gatherings provide us an opportunity to see where our government is going, to ask questions, and to get a better understanding of all the good work being done across the province. Already I am hearing many comments about how successful, informative and engaging this year’s AGA was. We will be sharing photos and video from our gathering over the next few weeks on our Facebook and website. Be sure to check them out.

I offer my prayers for our Citizens, friends and neighbours who have passed on. I also offer my condolences to their families. Best wishes to everyone.

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