

## **President's Message**

*October 27, 2016*

We have just passed through a Season of Thanksgiving when many of us had opportunity to gather with family and friends to share food, music, and dance, for those you who dance during Thanksgiving. It is good to come together with family and friends. It is also good to share what we have with others.

We are now heading into a Season of Remembrance. For our Métis Nation the month of November holds two special times of remembrance. On November 11th we remember and honour our Métis Soldiers and Peacekeepers who gave their lives for our freedom as well as offer our respects and gratitude for our Veterans who have passed on or who are here with us today. It is also important to reflect upon the sacrifices our families make in those times of trouble.

This past summer I participated in the unveiling of the Veteran's Memorial at Batoche. On this memorial are the names of the many who gave their lives beginning with the 1800s and onwards to our most recent Veterans of Canada's Wars. It was humbling to see so many names of those who gave their lives for the freedom we enjoy and often take for granted.

Did you know the Métis Veterans are the only Veterans that Canada has yet to formally recognize that wrongs were committed against them following the wars? Upon their return to Canada, very many Métis were not provided with the supports made available to other Veterans to assist them in re-establishing themselves back into the country and its economy. They were simply abandoned. Despite the fact Canada has often turned a blind eye towards the Métis – and has at times past actively fought against us in battles on the ground at such places as Batoche when we stood up for our rights, families, and lands– our Métis Veterans have always answered the call to defend Canadian freedoms. We will continue to pursue the just and equitable recognition of our Métis Veterans.

November 16th is also another important Day of Remembrance for the Métis. On this day we remember Louis Riel – Métis visionary, Founder of Manitoba and Father of Confederation. On this day each year we mark his death and celebrate his life. In 1885 Riel was executed in a judicial murder authored by the government of John A. MacDonald. MacDonald mistakenly believed his actions would bring about the demise of the Métis and once proclaimed that in 100 years there would be no Métis. Riel countered this thought by saying in 100 years our people would rise again.

Friends, it was almost 100 years later in 1982 that the Métis were formally recognized as rights bearing people in the Canadian Constitution. I invite you to stay tuned to our website, Facebook and Twitter for more information on how we will be commemorating Louis Riel this year. I also invite each of you to remember, in your own way and throughout the year, people such as Riel, Dumont, Bruce, Grant, Lépine, Goulet, Lagimodière, and Daniels as well as the many other leaders for their hard work, dedication and sacrifices for the benefit of the Citizens of the Métis Nation.

These people we remember have helped lay a strong foundation for the Métis. We are building on their vision and dedication a solid and lasting Métis Nation. The winds have changed for the Métis in many ways. Instead of always facing against a wind of steady opposition, we are now moving forward with a more favorable wind pushing us towards our goal of self-governance and reconciliation with Canada – our negotiating partner in Confederation. Let us press on towards our goal with sober mindedness, purpose and a vision for the future prosperity of our Métis Nation. We will receive our prize of self-governance if we press forward – never giving up and never surrendering our rights as a rights-bearing people in Canada.

This past week I have had the pleasure of hosting a delegation from China as a result of the historic Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) I signed on September 1st between the Manitoba Metis Federation's construction arm, Metis N4 Construction, and a leading Chinese housing developer, Beijing Yingdong Industrial Ltd. This JVA is anticipated to bring new innovative green technology to Canada to meet the housing needs of Indigenous and northern communities. During the delegation visit we discussed how we can bring the details of our JVA to reality. We also explored existing Métis and other housing opportunities and how to best manufacture in Manitoba the houses we will build using green technology.

On a different note, I want to share with you the exciting news that the Manitoba Metis Federation is an official co-host of the 2017 Canada Games. This is fitting as the games will be taking place in the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland. This is a good opportunity for our Métis Citizens to volunteer and share Métis culture. The Canada Games committee is also looking for artists to design the medals that will be awarded to athletes at the Games. What a great opportunity for our Métis Artists to potentially showcase their fine work on a national stage! I encourage our Métis Citizens to visit the Canada Games website at [www.2017canadagames.ca](http://www.2017canadagames.ca) to learn more about these exciting opportunities.

Finally, I wish to give my thoughts and prayers for those who are shut-in, ill or have cause for grief. May you find comfort and strength in community with family and friends. I wish you all the best and safe journeys should you be traveling this fall season. If you are participating in the harvest, may you be successful.

Meeqwetch,