

President's Message

January 11, 2017

Happy New Year! I hope you all have had a wonderful holiday season filled with laughter, love, joy and peace with all your family and friends. I have enjoyed some quality time with my own family and friends after an exceptionally busy 2016.

In the last issue of *Le Metis* I recounted the many wonderful happenings and accomplishments of 2016. The past year the MMF leadership and staff, along with our affiliated institutions MEDO, LRCC, MEDF, LRI, and others, worked hard and made considerable gains for the benefit of our Métis Citizens. I am looking forward to much more work and great accomplishments in 2017!

Soon I will be meeting again with Prime Minister Trudeau at the upcoming Métis Nation Summit between the Métis Nation and the federal government happening at the end of this month in Ottawa. We will be sitting together, nation-to-nation and government-to-government. This will be the first with Prime Minister Trudeau's government and will become a yearly meeting between Canada and its Negotiating Partner in Confederation – the Métis Nation.

During this meeting I will be representing our needs and concerns as we move towards negotiating full recognition of our self-government; a fair and equitable settlement of our comprehensive land claim; health care benefits; mutually beneficial economic development strategies and opportunities; and other important programs and services our Métis Citizens require. This is a meeting with all the governing members of the Métis Nation. I will meet with the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers to ensure the government has a good understanding of how the Manitoba Métis and our Confederation Partner will work together.

Our Ancestors, led by our Métis Leader Louis Riel and others, ensured we would be remembered as the Founders of Manitoba. This is a legacy many Canadians have tried so hard to forget. The forward momentum we have gathered this past year means we will no longer be the Forgotten People of this country. Our partner has returned to the negotiating table to work with us in reconciliation and to right the wrongs committed against us. Truly our time has come!

Today, our grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, as well as our friends and neighbours, continue to build strong families and healthy communities. They have made great progress. Yet they face challenges and the MMF, as your Métis Government, will be there in 2017 to help them overcome the obstacles they face in meeting their needs and in reaching their goals.

Over the coming months, we will resume building on the solid foundations the MMF has carefully placed during the past year. We will implement the plans and strategies we created for Métis health, rights and claims, and other social benefits. Economic development will continue to be a priority. Partnerships with other governments, institutions, and industry leaders will, without any doubt, continue to create new opportunities for business growth, education, training, and jobs.

We look to the future but we must never forget our past and those who walked beside us during prior years but who have passed on and now watch over us. Our departed grandparents, parents, siblings, children and cousins, as well as friends and neighbours will always be dearly remembered in our hearts. They offered us homes filled with warmth, love, and security. They nurtured us and helped us to grow. They are missed. Yet, my heart gladdens as I realize the potential, strength and resilience of the Métis Nation. We will continue to endure in our Citizens today and in our youth, children and grandchildren in the future. We will overcome and find our lasting place in Confederation.

I offer my best wishes for those who are sick or shut-in. May they be blessed with healing, health, and peace. I pray and share my heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies for all our neighbours, friends, and families who have lost loved ones. On behalf of our MMF Board of Directors, staff, and citizens, I wish everyone a Healthy, Happy and Successful 2017!

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