

President's Message

October 4, 2017

I am extremely proud of the achievements of the Manitoba Métis Government over the past fifty years. Since becoming President in 1997, I have been privileged to be at the helm of the Métis Government for many key moments and decisions impacting the Métis Nation.

In 1997, I promised to take the Manitoba Métis Land Claim all the way to the Supreme Court if needs be. Yes, we did have to go that far. It cost us millions to fight that battle. With the historic decision by the Supreme Court in 2013 when it said the honour of the Crown was not kept, and the constitutional promise to our Children was broken and our inheritance was robbed, we became positioned to negotiate the reconciliation of that broken promise.

In 2015, I worked with the new government led by Prime Minister Trudeau, to negotiate a framework agreement that will lead to a renewed government-to-government, nation-to-nation relationship with Canada. This framework agreement will also lead to recognition and constitutional protection of the Manitoba Métis Government.

These are just two accomplishments that I have been privileged to be a part of.

At our recent Annual General Assembly, I was pleased to share with Métis Citizens news about agreements my Cabinet and I have been able to negotiate and secure. During the Awakening the Spirit Concert on Friday, September 22, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, announced support by the federal government for the building of the Métis National Heritage Centre. This first ever Métis cultural and historic institute will be built at Upper Fort Garry where Riel's Métis Provisional Government founded the Province of Manitoba and negotiated its entrance into Confederation with Canada.

On Saturday, September 23 I announced phase one of our ambitious healthcare initiatives. Beginning November 16, the Manitoba Metis Federation will begin paying the medication prescription costs for lower income seniors aged 65 years and older.

Other announcements included an agreement with Enbridge that will bring economic development opportunity and jobs to Métis Citizens while engaging the Métis in ensuring and protecting the environmental safety of projects and initiatives undertaken by Enbridge in the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland.

During the AGA, the Métis Citizens also expressed their views and passed a resolution on Night Hunting and Night Lighting. Under the two resolutions passed, Métis Citizens decided that they would not permit night hunting in agro-Manitoba, but the practice would continue in remote areas of central and northern Manitoba. Métis Citizens also banned the practice of spotlighting in the province.

During the ceremonies of the AGA, I was deeply honoured by a presentation from the Métis Government recognizing my 20 years of leadership. I am humbled to be your President. I am proud of who we are, where we have come from and where we are going. The Métis of Manitoba is at a key crossroads. On our horizon lie great opportunities and we need to implement measures to protect our future. We cannot afford a misstep now.

Métis Citizens understand the importance of protecting what we have fought so hard for. In a resolution passed at the Assembly, Métis voted overwhelmingly to protect the leadership and efforts of those who have committed their lives to the Métis Nation. During a resolution passed, those wishing to run for President of the Manitoba Métis Government must prove themselves to the Métis Citizens by first fulfilling leadership at the Local level and then at the Regional level. After serving terms at both levels, only then will a person be eligible to run for President. We must protect how far we have come and we must ensure that those who wish to lead the Métis Government have first of all earned that right.

Friends, we are in a good position. I am proud of the work we have done together and at how far we have come. Stand strong. The best is yet to come.

In closing, I want to send my thoughts and prayers to those who are sick and shut in. I hope you recover quickly. As the Summer concludes and the Fall begins, I hope you have success in your harvesting. To those returning to school, I hope you have a very successful term. Thank you for your continued support and confidence.

Meeqwetch,