

President's Message – March 7

I am very proud today. Proud because the Metis Nation was finally recognized by the Federal government in a distinctions-based budget. Proud because Prime Minister Trudeau and his government got the language right, recognizing the differences between Metis, First Nations and Inuit Citizens. Proud because with this budget announcement the Metis Nation has been brought back into Canada. Finally, after 148 years!

This work and these conversations with government have been ongoing for a long, long time. Some governments tried to start the work under leaders like Pierre Elliot-Trudeau and Paul Martin, while others took a step back. I applaud Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister of Finance Bill Morneau for keeping their promises to the Metis Nation. THIS IS A METIS NATION BUDGET. With it we will see improvements to Metis health, housing and education. With it we finally see our hard-earned tax dollars put to work for the Metis Nation.

Some of the highlights from the budget include:

- \$500 million over 10 years for the Metis Nation Housing Strategy;
- \$325 million over 5 years in new Metis Nation employment and training funding; and
- major federal investments in an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and in Indigenous Child and Family Services which will include distinct allocations for the Metis Nation.

I know some of our Citizens may not think this funding announcement is enough. But this is an important step forward in our government-to-government, nation-to-nation relationship with Canada. Your Manitoba Metis Government will continue to work hard for all of you, our Citizens, to ensure that Canada keeps its word to the Metis Nation and continues to include us in future discussions.

I say with confidence that times are changing. I remember having to bang down the doors of politicians to participate in discussions and meetings. Now Canada is inviting us to these meetings and they are listening to our words. More than that they are taking action. So I commend Prime Minister Trudeau and his Ministers for their commitment to our Nation.

In closing, I offer my thoughts and prayers for those who are shut-in or are having difficult times through failing health, sickness or loss. May you find company, encouragement and help through your connections with family, friends and community. I wish you the best as we head into the brighter and warmer days of Spring.

Meeqwetch,