

President's Message – May 16

We are in the middle of Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) elections. Election Day is in just two weeks, on Thursday, May 31st. In this 2018 election, no challengers were nominated to run for the position of President. I have been acclaimed as President for a second, consecutive term. I am proud, honoured, and humbled to be chosen by our constituents to lead your Manitoba Métis Government.

Elections are an integral part of your Métis Government's democracy and take place every four years. Through the elections, Métis Citizens have the unequalled opportunity to shape their Government's mandate and direction for the next four years. Elections are much like report cards on the performance of your elected representatives. The elections also send a message about when change is needed and where we are following the right path. Clearly, we are on the right track.

The Chief Electoral Officer runs the MMF elections, independent of the MMF Caucus and the MMF departments. This provides for security and independence of the election and confidence in its results. We are proud of the process developed since the mid-1960s. MMF elections are a critically important part of our democracy, yet only one part. Democracy does not happen only once every four years – democracy is every year, every week, and every day throughout the term.

Always at the top of our minds, our Citizens are involved as participants throughout the MMF's structure. The MMF has an Annual General Assembly (AGA) open to all Métis Citizens. At the AGA we have reports, discussion, debates, and resolutions giving further direction or course changes. Regional Assemblies are also held each year, in villages, towns, and cities across the province, where our Local executives meet with Citizens. There are also many consultation workshops on important issues throughout the year, led by your elected Ministers and attended by our Citizens.

It is important to state that we are not a small, insignificant special interest group, nor a fly-by-night organization. Together with your MMF Caucus, we represent over 120,000 Métis people across Manitoba, at both urban and rural levels. The MMF governance structure is province-wide, with more than 130 Locals across Manitoba. The MMF provides democratic governance for all Métis Nation Citizens in Manitoba. There isn't an inch of ground in the province where Métis people don't have democratic self-government representation.

The MMF is the voice of our Manitoba Métis community. As I have recently said elsewhere: it has been through our political and legal struggles, in the political arena and in the courts of law, that we have advanced the claims, rights, and interests of our Métis Nation Citizens and our local communities over the past two decades. We made it clear that we want to be partners with other governments, as well as industry, but we will not be forgotten or walked on.

I am honoured that our electorate has confidence in the work and accomplishments we have made together. I want to thank everyone who made this possible: elected representatives in our Caucus and elected representatives in each of our Locals across the province. Our volunteers, always ready to voice their concerns, share the load, and roll up their sleeves to help, must also be thanked.

Over the coming weeks, I am and will continue to be on the road attending many campaign and cultural events. For example, this week we had a ribbon cutting ceremony at two newly-built homes on Dufferin Avenue in Selkirk. This is another step in our initiative to develop and deliver housing for our Citizens. We are looking at a variety of models for housing that will meet the needs of our community. I look forward to seeing you at many of these kinds of events.

I offer my best wishes for those who are sick or shut-in. I pray you will be blessed with healing, health, and peace. I also pray and share my heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies for all our neighbours, friends, and families who have lost loved ones. And good luck to all candidates on the campaign trail who are working hard to be your representatives.

Meeqwetch,