

President's Message – June 13

The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is the democratic self-government of the Manitoba Metis Community. Our Community is not made up solely of what can commonly be called “bricks and mortar.” We are not just one village or a small plot of land. We are nearly a hundred hamlets, villages, and towns with our traditional territory across all of Manitoba. Our Community encompasses a great area and a great number of people within and outside of the province.

We are part of the Metis Nation. The MMF is the successor of historic Metis governments and has deep roots in the events of 1869-70. The Manitoba Metis are the Founders of the Province of Manitoba and Canada's Negotiating Partners in Confederation. The MMF is the Metis Government resting on the Birthplace of the Metis Nation, centered at the Heart of the Metis Nation Homeland.

Our MMF Constitution briefly describes the Manitoba Metis Community in its Preamble, and it is worth repeating here: “[...] the Manitoba Metis Community comprises Metis Citizens, settlements also known as local communities, and traditional territories, and is defined by a common identity, culture, history and, among other things, social and kinship relationships;”

Our Constitution makes clear that, as the government, we are “[...] to provide responsible and accountable governance on behalf of the Manitoba Metis Community using the constitutional authorities delegated by its members.” The MMF leadership has the first responsibility and duty to our Community and to our Citizens.

This past week, after completing a recount, the Chief Electoral Officer released the final and official results for the 2018 Provincial Election. In this election several candidates were elected by acclamation, including myself as President. I am ready to serve my seventh term. I am proud, honoured, and humbled. Our people have shown their confidence in our governance and in our mandate.

Again, I want to thank everyone who took up the challenge and accepted his or her nomination to run for a position in our Manitoba Metis Government. I know I am speaking on behalf of all our elected representatives when I say that it is privilege to participate in our caucus and an honour to serve our Metis Citizens. Together we will continue to advocate and protect our rights as well as develop innovative ways to address our People's needs and meet their aspirations.

Subsequent to the successful election, this week was the MMF Inauguration Ceremony for our democratically elected Leadership. At the Inauguration, each of our Caucus Leaders, including myself, made our Oath and were sworn into office. With our Oath, we declare to be faithful to the Metis people, and to the MMF. Each of us commits to upholding and defending the MMF Constitution and carry out his or her duties, obligations and responsibilities in a manner that will bring honour to the Metis Nation.

Since 1997, the MMF has grown from a half-dozen staff to nearly 800 in the MMF and its affiliates. The MMF represents approximately 120,000 Metis Citizens across Manitoba at both urban and rural levels. The MMF provides democratic governance province-wide for all Metis Nation Citizens of Manitoba with over 80 Locals in the rural areas. As I said elsewhere: there isn't an inch of ground in the province where Metis people don't have self-government representation.

This growth corresponds to the increased responsibilities and trust in our Caucus, staff, and myself. I again want to thank our citizens, leaders, and staff. Together we have built the nationally recognized Government of the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community. Through our political and legal struggles, in the political arena and in the courts of law, we have advanced the claims, rights, and interests of our Metis Nation Citizens over the past two decades.

Your elected Leaders on the MMF Caucus have a heavy responsibility. As Leaders, we have the duty to promote the political, social and economic interests and rights, as well as the history and culture of our Metis

Citizens. As our Leaders they are to search for innovative solutions to resolve the challenges as well as meet our people's needs and aspirations. At times this requires hard decisions to meet objectives and, often, as they say, it is "to square the circle." Politics has been described as the "art of the possible."

We have come very far over the past 20 years. We have accomplished much but there is more to do over the next four. We have only started. I look forward to working together over this next term on many new initiatives and to complete unfinished business. Together we will continue united as Citizens, Leaders, and partners for the benefit of our Citizens living today and for our future generations.

I offer my prayers for our family members, friends and neighbours who have passed on. I also offer my condolences to their families. It is my hope that those with ill health and pain may be healed. Best wishes to everyone.

Meeqwetch,