

## **President's Message – August 22**

One of the most rewarding aspects of serving as your President is having the opportunity to meet with you in our cities, towns, and villages across Manitoba. I am always grateful to hear your news and to share with you the work that the MMF is doing to protect your rights and improve Métis lives in every Region.

Recently, I was able to participate in both the Southwest and Northwest Regional Assemblies. At the Southwest Regional meeting on July 28 in Brandon, and the Northwest Regional meeting on August 11 in Swan River, I was very happy to share with Citizens our good news about the many positive changes coming for Manitoba's Métis Nation.

I reported on our progress with Housing, with Employment and Training, and with Early Learning and Child Care, where successful negotiations with the Federal Government have led to new Accords and sub-Accords that will deliver millions of dollars in resources for the Manitoba Métis Community over the next decade. Together, we will use these resources wisely to create new opportunities for addressing the needs of our people, through innovative services and programs designed by and for the Métis Nation.

I also provided updates on our ongoing work to secure justice and compensation for our World War II Veterans and for our Sixties Scoop survivors. I had a good meeting with the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Canada's Minister of Veterans Affairs, and he has sent me a letter confirming his commitment to resolving the Métis Veterans issue. There are discussions ongoing between our senior officials and I am confident that we will bring justice and respect to our surviving Veterans.

As for the Sixties Scoop, I have also met with the responsible Minister, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett. She is providing her full support for resolution of this horrible era experienced by our children and their families. We have directed our senior officials to engage and develop the processes for funding and meetings. Already we have a national working group and are planning for a Sixties Scoop Symposium for survivors and families on October 19, 20 and 21 this year.

I also spoke to the fact that, moving forward, we are about to witness changes like we have never seen before. We know that big change can happen. Through persistence, intelligent negotiation, and never giving up, we have taken important steps in securing a better future for our children and grandchildren. We are entering an era of historic, unprecedented change for the Manitoba Métis Community. We are expecting announcements across a variety of initiatives over the coming months. It goes to show that we must always hold on to our dreams for justice and prosperity for our people, as it is these dreams that fuel our determination to fight and to win.

As we open this new chapter, I'm very thankful to have the support of the people, our Regions and Locals. I am honoured to serve you and want to thank you for standing with me and your Ministers.. Together we will ensure that your rights to all future negotiated benefits are protected for our grandchildren, great-grandkids and generations to come.

As the summer draws to a close, please take the opportunity to connect with your Local and Region. We have upcoming Regional Meetings in the Southeast in Grand Marais on September 8, in Winnipeg September 9, and The Pas September 15. There are also Métis Days hosted by several of

our Locals in coming weeks, including Koushkoupayh Days in Grand Valley September 1-2, St. Eustache Métis Day September 15 and Portage La Prairie Métis Day on September 16. The MMF encourages these types of initiatives, which build community and promote our culture and Métis artists. Speak to your Regional Office if you would like to collaborate on a similar event near you.

The Annual General Assembly this year takes place September 21 through 23 at Assiniboia Downs in Winnipeg. Mark your calendars, fill out your registration form, and prepare your travel plans. You will want to be there, with thousands of other proud Métis Citizens. We are optimistic that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau may also join us for the event, sharing one or more announcements to mark the beginning of a new chapter in Manitoba Métis history.

To conclude, I send my thoughts and prayers to all those who are facing illness, and to those affected by events such as the tornado that passed through Alonsa or the wildfire smoke hovering over our cities and towns in recent weeks. May you find strength and resilience, supported by family and community. For those who have lost a loved one, I share my deepest sympathies. And may each of you enjoy a plentiful harvest as summer winds into fall. I look forward to seeing you at the Annual General Assembly.

Meeqwetch,