



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The health and well-being of Red River Métis women is important, and it has taken prominence in recent weeks. We are a matriarchal nation – it is our mothers who teach us and lead our families, and who are the majority of our leaders at the Local level, as well as the staff leadership of your Red River Métis Government. Of the 23 elected officials sitting around the MMF Cabinet table, 11 are women, so there can be no question that our women play an important role in our families, our Nation, and our government.

But we know that Red River Métis women are also vulnerable to the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women, and the resulting heartache of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

Spokeswoman Anita Campbell of Infinity Women Secretariat and Minister Frances Chartrand and I attended the MMIWG roundtable in Ottawa last week, which saw federal, provincial, and territorial governments gather with Indigenous governments and organizations to discuss this important issue. We listened to the challenges and concerns facing Indigenous communities across Canada, and worked together to find solutions that can be implemented. We also spoke about our challenges and concerns, and the programs we've initiated to support our women.

One of the most significant topics discussed was creating a Red Dress Alert. Similar to Amber Alerts

for children who have gone missing, and Silver Alerts for seniors and Elders who can't be located, a Red Dress Alert system would allow for greater profile and awareness when an Indigenous woman or person goes missing.

Of course, your Red River Métis Government is supportive of a Red Dress Alert system. But there are many questions that need to be addressed – how do communities without broadband internet receive the alerts? What are the circumstances under which a Red Dress Alert is triggered? Who makes the decision to trigger a Red Dress Alert? How are the relevant Indigenous governments and organizations engaged in the process? It is our way that when someone goes missing, we don't just react to that – we must be poised to support the family, and act in concert with them, when they express their needs. Above all else, a Red Dress Alert must be used in a thoughtful, measured way, so that we don't lose the significance and importance of each alert.

Even with these questions to address, and the functional operation of a Red Dress Alert system, we know that it can be a powerful tool and can work with the overall effort to reduce the harm and violence as we help to bring our missing loved ones home before they are permanently lost to us.

By now, I'm sure you will have heard about the arrest made in the case of Crystal Saunders – a 24-year-old woman who identified as Métis, who was murdered 17 years ago. Our hearts go out to Crystal's family and friends, as we know that an arrest can bring some sense of relief or closure, but it doesn't bring Crystal back. There is also a long road ahead, with the trial and eventual verdict to come. These are painful things to face for those who loved Crystal, as this process reopens old wounds and memories of difficult times.

Thanks to advancements in DNA analysis and technology, the RCMP have the suspect in custody. I commend the RCMP for never giving up on this case, and for finally being able to arrest a suspect. It's crucial that cold cases involving MMIWG remain active, because without resolution, it is incredibly hard to find a path toward healing for those left behind. Continuing to work on these cases shows families, communities, and Indigenous Nations that their lost loved ones have not been forgotten.

While our relationship with the RCMP continues to gain strength, through partnership and strong communication, there are still opportunities to enhance our efforts, so that we can be more present for our families through difficult times, including announcements of arrests and

throughout court processes. I have high confidence that Spokeswoman Campbell and Minister Julyda Lagimodiere of the Métis Justice Institute will continue this dialogue with the RCMP, fostering better understanding and implementing stronger policies and programs.

One program that is already well underway, which we spoke about at the MMIWG roundtable, is the Pey Key Way Ta Hin – *Bring Me Home Program*. We shared that ending the epidemic of violence against our women is such a priority for our Nation that we set aside \$1 million of your own Red River Métis Government's funds, held on your behalf, to create this family-driven, inclusive program. The funding allows us to provide a \$10,000 reward for information leading to arrests and convictions in cold cases involving missing and murdered loved ones, as well as putting up billboards to raise awareness about the missing individuals. I hope you are as proud as we are that we have made such great strides that we can invest in a fund like this, to help grieving families find their missing loved ones.

These rewards and billboards require a coordinated approach with our RCMP partners. Every time we announce a reward or put up a billboard, their offices receive a high volume of calls, and they need to be staffed and prepared to field these calls.

To date, we have supported Jennifer Catcheway's family with an additional \$10,000 for tips leading to an arrest and conviction in her case, on top of the \$10,000 offered by the family. We have also offered \$10,000 for information leading to an arrest and conviction in Marcus McKay's case, and have put up a billboard near his last known location. We are currently engaged in discussions with several other families to hear their stories and see how the program may work for them. It's very clear that there is no true closure for families as long as their loved ones remain missing, or their murders remain unsolved.

Spokeswoman Campbell and her team have been hard at work developing the second part of the Pey Key Way Ta Hin – *Bring Me Home Program*, which provides support for the families once the cases have been solved, or loved ones have been located. We know that making an arrest or locating a loved one is only one part of the process. We need to be able to support them every step of the way. The second part of the program will do exactly that, whether it be through advocacy, wraparound services, or just a warm and comforting presence when they need it. The Red River Métis Government is here to support our women and their families. We continue to support our women through violence prevention education, empowerment,

community connection, and economic opportunities. But there is still so much more to be done before we can truly say we've addressed this epidemic of violence against our women and all Indigenous women. We will never stop building

partnerships, raising awareness, and strengthening our women.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and

my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand. LL.D. hon. Q.M. ∞

LOUIS RIEL ACT PAVES THE PATH TO RECONCILIATION AND RECOGNITION

In 2023, Red River Métis, Manitobans, and Canadians saw the righting of a 153-year-old injustice, and recognizing Louis Riel as the first Premier of Manitoba.

The *Louis Riel Act* is the culmination of more than 30 years of advocacy and public education, led by the Manitoba Métis Federation and President David Chartrand. From the 1994 removal of a statue that portrayed a tortured Riel in a distressing way, to the creation of the existing Riel statue at the Manitoba Legislative building, and the recognition of Riel as the Founder of Manitoba and a Father of Confederation, each step has led to the next step on the journey to this recognition. Commemorative stamps and coins and the 2008 establishment of Louis Riel Day on the third Monday in February all built the momentum toward giving the Red River Métis leader the recognition he deserved.

Following the election of the New Democratic Party in October 2023, Premier Wab Kinew honoured the commitment he made to thousands upon thousands of Red River Métis Citizens at our 2023 Annual General Assembly by introducing the *Louis Riel Act* in November. It received Royal Assent and became law in December. This law bestows the title of "First Premier of Manitoba" to Louis Riel and changes how his role in Manitoba's history is taught in our education system.

Born in 1844, Riel was the visionary leader of the Red River Métis. He was only 25 years old when he and other Red River Métis leaders formed a provisional government and presented Canada with a Bill of Rights. Eventually translated into the 1870 *Manitoba Act*, the Bill of Rights was essentially a treaty and constitutional commitment from Canada to the Red River Métis and the residents of the new postage stamp province of Manitoba. When Louis Riel was forced to flee the reign of terror enacted



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upon the Red River Métis after bringing Manitoba into Canada's confederation, he spent five years in the United States, exiled away from his people, before being called to lead the Red River Métis once again as they resisted Canada's unilateral action against the Nation.

An iconic figure in Canadian history, Riel protected Red River Métis self-determination, language and religious rights, as well as protections for First Nations who resided in the region. Resisting injustice at every turn, he and his government took a stand to protect our rights, our lands, and our families. Without Riel crusading for these rights, the landscape of Manitoba and Canada would look very different today. Riel blazed the trail for self-governance and recognition, and your Red River Métis Government is the embodiment of his legacy.

Le Metis connected with some Red River Métis Citizens to see what the *Louis Riel Act* means to them leading up to Louis Riel Day.

Red River Métis lawyer Victoria Perrie emphasized the bill's profound significance.

"The *Louis Riel Act* is a long overdue acknowledgment of Manitoba's true past. This Act pays obeisance to all the road allowance Métis who lived their lives pushed to the sides and forgotten while encapsulating the Métis spirit of resilience and resistance of the status quo," she said.

The *Louis Riel Act* also requires that the provincial minister charged with the administration of *The Education Administration Act* take reasonable steps to ensure the curriculum delivered by public and independent schools includes the significant contributions of Louis Riel to Manitoba and Canada and an acknowledgment of his title.

Before the bill was passed, Riel's role in Manitoba's history was regularly put up for debate and often villainized throughout our education system. Riel paved the way for all Manitobans to be able to call this great province home, and our Citizens Beyond Borders to recognize Winnipeg as the very heart of our Homeland. His journey didn't come without hardships and sacrifices – Riel earned nothing for his efforts and lived in poverty. He was further denied his seat in Parliament three times, despite being democratically elected. Following the Northwest Resistance, Riel was hanged for treason in 1885, which the Red River Métis have always known was nothing more than judicially sanctioned murder.

Shannondoah Fleury, Cultural Youth Worker with the Southwest Region and member of the Les Métis Local, remembers how her school explained Louis Riel's role in history 15 years ago.

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“I AM GLAD THE CROWN HAVE PROVED THAT I AM THE LEADER OF THE HALF-BREEDS IN THE NORTHWEST. I WILL PERHAPS BE ONE DAY ACKNOWLEDGED AS MORE THAN A LEADER OF THE HALF-BREEDS, AND IF I AM, I WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY OF BEING ACKNOWLEDGED AS A LEADER OF GOOD IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY.” – LOUIS RIEL

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"I was from the age range where Louis Riel was a 'traitor.' That was one of the only things we learned," she said.

Growing up in a strong Red River Métis household, Fleury knew the inaccuracies of this depiction and was excited to discuss the beautiful parts of Métis history. When her social studies class was about to start their unit on Métis people, she was ecstatic.

"I was so excited to finally see the representation of my people. We were going to learn about it in class. I was ready to talk to my fellow students," she said.

Fleury was disappointed to see the misinformation that was taught in class that day. After discussing the matter with her father, she thought the best solution would be to have President Chartrand come and speak at her school.

"He did end up coming to my school in Minnedosa to talk about the Métis people," Fleury said. "I was lucky enough to have those resources in my life and those strong models I could look up to."

Fleury is eager to see the positive changes that will come from the *Louis Riel* Act and how new generations will learn about the true history of our province.

Perrie, on the other hand, does not recall ever learning about Louis Riel in the education system.

"This isn't to say I necessarily wasn't taught it – but it doesn't stand out in my mind. My education has been mostly self-taught or learned through attending interesting events or lectures," she said.

The lawyer acknowledges how crucial this Act is and understands how it could potentially influence any forthcoming laws concerning the Red River Métis.

"Implementation of this Act is a testament to the ongoing hard work of the (Red River) Métis to define their own destiny and overcome adversity by recognizing our kin, Louis Riel, as the right and first Premier of Manitoba," she said. "To me, this Act is a celebration of Métis heritage at the governmental level which may open doors for our Nation as we await passage of our modern-day treaty."



This past November, the Manitoba government announced the Louis Riel Act – a bill that recognizes Red River Métis leader Louis Riel.



RED RIVER MÉTIS CLIMATE SYMPOSIUM

RESCHEDULED!

Visit MMF.MB.CA to Register



***NEW DATES:**

APRIL 19-21, 2024

WINNIPEG, MB



TOPIC: CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY

Eligibility: Red River Métis Citizens (ages 14+)

***NEW registration and submission of presentation deadline of March 1, 2024**

If you have already registered for the Climate Symposium, please check your email.
If not, to register, connect with technical staff through the STEWARDS@MMF.MB.CA inbox.



LOUIS RIEL DAY GAMES PAGE

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



WORD SEARCH

Louis Riel Day

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

L R E I M E R P Q U M I J I G G I N G C
Q A R E H C A E T W T B M J T S E I R P
U T U H D O F M I C H I F Z L X V R E L
G A A G C Y O E S R R E V I R D E R H G
N B G T N N A F B R T R A P P I N G T O
I O O Q N I E N I E B U F F A L O J A V
T T W E Z O L R A D A U P K Y M O K F E
S I G I G G M I F T D D R H M O U A Q R
E N N O V N Z U B D N L W K X Z L T P N
V A I C N J C F D R P O E O H E R O L M
R M H J V L G O O A P E M L R S C A H E
A V S N H S E K N U E D U Z I K N X C N
H W I B M R R I D F N F G T Z O V I D T
C W F L G W B D R K C D E W I C T H O Y
A R F B K C O N N A B M E S O I W C X B
R G Z N A C I M M E P W I R Z J K X R L
T H U H Y T B I H F R V J E L E G A C Y
S B S F X G T A G S O A N F G C A N O E
Y A E U F H J S K R E S I S T A N C E P
S A J R S R O A P D N A L E M O H J G T

Word Bank

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|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. fishing | 2. redriver | 3. legacy | 4. riel |
| 5. father | 6. michif | 7. montana | 8. priest |
| 9. buffalo | 10. teacher | 11. citizens | 12. beadwork |
| 13. hero | 14. bannock | 15. fur | 16. french |
| 17. dumont | 18. founder | 19. sash | 20. premier |
| 21. bilingual | 22. harvesting | 23. canoe | 24. jigging |
| 25. fiddle | 26. metis | 27. carts | 28. pemmican |
| 29. trapping | 30. homeland | 31. resistance | 32. manitoba |
| 33. government | 34. provisional | | |



FIND
MÉTIS STANLEY



EXPLORE MORE
LOUIS RIEL DAY ACTIVITIES
ON OUR KIDS' CORNER!