



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"During my life, I have aimed at practical results. I have writings, and after my death, I hope that my spirit brings practical results. . . if I have any influence in the new world, it is to help in that way, and even if it takes 200 years to become practical, then after my death, that will bring out practical results."

- Final statement of Louis Riel at his trial in Regina, 1885

February 19 was Louis Riel Day here in Manitoba, the heart of our Homeland. It's known as Family Day in most other provinces and jurisdictions in Canada, with the exception of some of the Atlantic provinces. It was also the first Louis Riel Day following the official acknowledgement of his role in the creation of Manitoba and as its first Premier, and your Red River Métis Government took the opportunity to start educating all Canadians about our historic leader. There were national and local television commercials about his role in the creation of Manitoba, along with many events and activities to celebrate the day, Red River Métis style.

Thinking about Riel's final statement at his trial above, you can see why our Nation followed him during his lifetime and why we still revere him today – he was a highly intelligent man who was able to picture how Canada, the Red River Métis, and Manitoba would evolve with great accuracy. He clearly understood that the battles of the Red River Métis were not done, and that we would have

to continue to work together to find our rightful place in Canada's confederation. Riel also seemed to understand that if we kept our faith in our Nation and our culture, we would see justice for our people and for our historic leader, even if we had to wait generations.

Seeing Riel recognized as the first Premier last year was a proud moment for me, coming after nearly 30 years of advocacy.

This Louis Riel Day was the perfect time to continue what we started last year, with the passage of the *Louis Riel Act*. There has been a photo of Riel in the Legislative Building since Greg Selinger and I worked together to hang it there in 2016. At the time, it used to say "President." As of February 19 of this year, it now says:

First Premier Louis Riel
March 1870–June 1870
(Received Royal Assent in December 2023)
Founder of Manitoba. Proud Red River Métis.

I had goosebumps when Premier Kinew and I unveiled these words on Riel's portrait in front of our Red River Métis Cabinet, as well as many representatives of the Government of Manitoba, including Red River Métis MLAs Bernadette Smith, Renée Cable, Tyler Blashko, Robert Loiselle, and Billie Cross.

I appreciated Premier Kinew's remarks at the time, particularly when he echoed our longstanding urging that Canada recognize Louis Riel as an official Father of Confederation. This emphasizes the fact that the acknowledgement of Louis Riel as the first Premier of Manitoba is just one step along the path to full recognition of his contributions, along with the contributions of our people to the shape of Canada today.

The honouring of Louis Riel through this new language on his portrait was only part of the day. It was equally important to share this day with Citizens and with Riel himself. As everyone knows, I am a man of faith – I know in my heart that Riel was present with us as we travelled to his gravesite to present him with a signed copy of the *Louis Riel Act*. I know he was touched to see so many people gathered around his grave, to pay tribute to his legacy and his life's work. I know he was proud to see that his Nation is growing and thriving, and that we still govern ourselves through the MMF – the National Government of the Red River Métis.

It was important that Premier Kinew joined me in presenting the Act at Riel's gravesite, so Citizens

could express their gratitude and appreciation for his government. It was equally important to have Minister Denise Thomas and my granddaughter Martha Chartrand join us as well. Bringing Minister Thomas with me was important, because she has been an active part of our government for decades and her contributions to our advancement must be acknowledged and celebrated. Including my granddaughter sends a message to our Youth – one day soon, the torch of our Nation will be handed to you, and you will be responsible for the ongoing pursuit of justice for our people, ensuring our Red River Métis Nation is truly respected and included in the fabric of Canada. This will be the task that will be left for you, and as is our way, we want to include you so you never forget and never give up fighting for the Red River Métis.

I know stories will be told about this historic day – much like we now talk about the Convention of 40 in 1870. Perhaps someone who attended Louis Riel's gravesite to witness the proceedings will write stories about the day, which will be read and discussed in another 154 years.

I know I am so proud, and so touched to have represented our people and our government on this important day, celebrating what we achieved and recognizing Riel for what he always was. Now we can continue to educate people that Riel was not a rebel, a madman, or a traitor. He was a leader of our people, and through him, the Red River Métis established the values that Manitoba now stands for today – inclusiveness, the welcome of newcomers, diversity, and upholding the rights of all. He was a real leader for all Manitobans, and we are on our way to having all Manitobans understand that truth.

While the events in the heart of our Homeland were important and were picked up by media outlets across Canada and even into the United States as far as Florida, these were not the only events that celebrated Louis Riel Day and the leader the holiday was named for. From Thompson to Selkirk, St. Eustache to Roblin, Powerview to Stony Point, and Victoria Beach to Turtle Mountain, our Locals rolled out the red carpet to Citizens and the broader community. Of course, each and every celebration included music, food, and traditional activities. I am so proud of the efforts of our Local leadership to show our Red River Métis hospitality to all who stopped by.

I would have loved to attend each event and visit with people in each region, but there were so many it simply wasn't possible. I was able to stop by the celebrations put on by Liberty Local in Winnipeg on the Saturday night, and in St. Eustache on the Sunday, and I enjoyed spending time with our

Citizens at both events, listening to music, eating good food, and enjoying the dancing and other activities.

However you celebrated, wherever you celebrated – if it was in your own home, or among other Red River Métis at an event – I hope you enjoyed this Louis Riel Day. Your Red River Métis Government will continue to advance our Nation, not only by continuing to advocate for the legacy of Louis Riel, but also by ensuring that our priorities are addressed at all other levels of government. There

is no doubt that this Louis Riel Day was special. This year and every year, I encourage all of our local leaders and families to take the time to enjoy the activities on Louis Riel Day. So bring your family out for the festivities and bring all the joy, smiles, and pride you can muster as you support our Locals and appreciate the hard work the volunteers do that makes it so special. I also encourage you all to walk with great pride each and every day, ensuring that the dream and the vision of equality and fairness for our people and respect for our culture and identity are maintained.

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. O.M. ∞

RESEARCH PROJECT SETS OUT TO FIND OUR MISSING CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED RESIDENTIAL AND DAY SCHOOLS

The subject matter in this article contains sensitive topics such as survivor experiences of Residential Schools, abuse, and self-harm. For access to Red River Métis mental health resources and services, call 1-833-390-1041 Ext. 1.

Ernest Samatte has seen firsthand the suffering that took place at the hands of the Residential School system.



Ernest Samatte, Residential School Survivor and member of the Residential and Day School Survivor Advisory Committee, has seen firsthand the suffering that many have experienced throughout this horrific chapter in Canada's history.

Originally born in a small community near Winnipegosis, Samatte was seven years old when he and his brother were forced to leave home and attend a school run by the Ursuline Sisters in Bruxelles, Manitoba. After his time there, he attended school at Maison Chapelle – a building still standing in St. Boniface to this day. The survivor managed to leave when he was 15 years old, but he still carries the painful memories of his school experiences with him.

Following this period, Samatte connected with others who had similar experiences. He recalled

students who had attended Residential Schools in Fort Alexander.

“They’re not here today. They committed suicide and I often think about that. A lot of these students, a lot of these children, when they came out of schools there was no support,” he said. “A lot of people kept that (pain) with them, and a lot of people passed on like that. They took everything with them.”

Samatte noted the lack of resources available for these students following their experiences in the Residential School System.

“There was nothing. There was never anything like that. You know, when I came out of it myself, when I came out of residence, I just wanted to get away from it and try (to) do other things, and not think about it until now. But it’s always in the back of your mind,” he said.

Samatte has been able to share stories of his lived experience with the Residential and Day School Survivor Advisory Committee, of which he is a member of. The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) created the Committee to ensure Red River Métis Survivors’ views are considered when discussing issues, and that their expertise and perspectives are considered in MMF initiatives.

“I thought maybe I could have some input, you know, with my experience over the years. It’s always nice to share what you know and how you feel about this, (because) everybody’s got feelings. And some of us got different types of feelings,” Samatte said.

The MMF aims to continue to foster the sharing of stories and honour these children. In 2022, the MMF started the Pekeywaytahihnan nutr zanfaan leur zisprii project (We are Bringing Our Children’s Spirit Home). In addition to the project, part of this important work involved creating a sash to honour Red River Métis children who attended Residential and Day Schools.

Andrew Carrier, Minister of Residential and Day Schools, recognizes the magnitude of this project.

“As a survivor of childhood abuse from a priest while attending elementary day school, the Bringing our Children’s Spirit Home Project is a symbol of resiliency, where we can wear a beautifully created sash that offers hope and forgiveness for that little child to regain a sense of integrity and self-respect,” he said. “It is a long and difficult journey that we as survivors can no longer remain silent.”

The objective of the project has been to identify the location of Red River Métis children who went missing while forced to attend these institutions.



The Residential and Day School Survivor Advisory Committee was established as a way of addressing the needs of Red River Métis Survivors and their families.



In 2023, the Every Red River Métis Child Matters orange sash was presented at the MMF AGA to honour Red River Métis children who attended Residential and Day Schools.

“The Bringing our Children’s Spirit Home Project exists to begin to redress the colonial violence that forced our Red River Métis children to attend Residential and Day Schools. Some of our children never made it home. This project sets out to determine where our missing children are, to honour them and their families, and to bring our children’s spirit home,” said Minister Carrier.

“I think you know that we must identify and honour all our children, those that were taken and never came home,” added Samatte. “The dark chapter of

Residential Schools in Canada will never be history until all the searches are complete.”

The project will help both the families of lost Red River Métis children that never came home, as well as survivors as a way of fostering connection to our Métis culture.

“Our survivors spoke of the importance for our people to have a cultural symbol that distinguishes

PEKEYWAYTAHIHNNAN NUTR ZANFAAN LEUR ZISPRII PROJECT (WE ARE BRINGING OUR CHILDREN’S SPIRIT HOME)



The research project focuses on three fundamental questions:

- 1. Who are our children?
- 2. Where are they?
- 3. How do we honour those who went missing?

DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION?

The MMF is looking to connect with individuals who are:

- ∞ Red River Métis who survived Residential School/Day Schools
- ∞ Family members of Red River Métis who attended Residential Schools
- ∞ Citizens with knowledge of missing children and/or burial sites

If you or someone you know meets these criteria and would like to share information, please reach out to the MMF’s Sixties Scoop and Residential Schools Department at 1-877-595-2194.

Please note that you may be eligible for an honorarium when sharing this knowledge with us.

our Métis culture as it relates to the Residential School system and stands out as a visual reminder of honouring our Red River Métis children,” Minister Carrier said.

The Every Red River Métis Child Matters sash, created by Sixties Scoop Survivor Malanie Cutler, was presented to members of the Committee at the MMF’s Annual General Assembly in October 2023.

“The sash will visibly show that they are not alone in their life road of recovery. I felt shame, hatred, anger, and went through a period of self-harm as there was no one that I could turn to,” said Minister Carrier. “This project is the first step for Survivors and the families of missing children, who will finally get a voice as to what they may need for healing and support.”

Red River Métis Citizens are encouraged to participate and register in the upcoming Survivors Symposium from March 8-10, 2024, at the Fairmont Hotel in Winnipeg to hear firsthand how we (survivors) have managed to be where we are today and what programs and services may be required from their Red River Métis National Government.

MMF CELEBRATES I LOVE TO READ MONTH



Throughout February, your Red River Métis Government helped encourage readership in young people. For I Love To Read Month, Cabinet Members went to schools to read books to students and educate them about Red River Métis history and culture. The MMF encourages Citizens to share their stories, heritage, culture, and identity through the written word.





The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)
is conducting a research project titled
Pekeywaytahihnan nutr zanfaan leur zisprii
(We are Bringing Our Children's Spirit Home)

This project aims to determine where our missing children who attended Residential and Day Schools are, honour them, their families, and their communities, and bring our children's spirit home.

Please connect with us if you are:

- A Red River Métis citizen who survived Residential or Day Schools who has knowledge of or knows the location of missing children or burial sites,
- A family member of a Red River Métis citizen who attended Residential or Day School who has knowledge of or knows the location of missing children or burial sites, or
- A Red River Métis citizen who knows of or knows where missing children or burial sites are.

MMF Mental Health Support Line - 7 am to 11 pm daily
Mental Health Phone Service 1-833-390-1041 Ext. 1

If you think you have information to contribute to this research, please reach out to MMF's Sixties Scoop and Residential Schools department at 1-877-595-2194 or sixties.scoop@mmf.mb.ca

Please note that you may be eligible for an honorarium when sharing this knowledge with us.



**SIXTIES SCOOP,
RESIDENTIAL & DAY SCHOOL
SYMPOSIUM**

∞
**Our Nation,
Our Families,
Ourselves**

JOIN US MARCH 8-10
AT THE FAIRMONT HOTEL WINNIPEG, MB.
TO **HONOUR**

OUR **NATION,**
OUR **FAMILIES,**
OUR **SELVES.**

To attend, contact
Engagement and Consultation
at 204-586-8474

