



# Métis Nation



Jan/Feb 2018

## Métis Nation Statement on Indigenous Child and Family Services Reform



On January 26, 2018, the Métis Nation was encouraged by the outcome of the emergency meeting on Indigenous Child and Family Services Reform in Ottawa involving federal, provincial and territorial ministers and the

leadership of the Métis Nation, First Nations and Inuit.

“The federal government’s commitment to action, in particular its commitment to support Métis Nation leadership in their work to

advance meaningful, culturally-appropriate reform of child and family services, is an essential first step,” said David Chartrand, Vice-President of the Métis National Council (MNC). “Following up is even more important and to that end

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MNC Vice-President David Chartrand addressing the media

support Métis child and family institutions where these exist and to support the creation of new Métis Nation child and family authorities.

- Addressing the crisis of Metis children and families requires long-term institutional changes and sustained coordinated activities of all orders of government. Strengthening accountability calls for an Annual Summit on Métis Nation child and family issues.

we set out some specific steps that should be taken.”

The Métis Nation’s Minister of Culture and Families, Clara Morin Dal Col, identified those steps during the discussion of commitment to action. They are:

- Building upon the Nation-to-Nation, government-to-government relationship other levels of Government need to recognize the Métis Nation’s right to assume its jurisdiction over Child and Family Services.

• The Federal Government needs to

recognize its post-Daniels fiduciary responsibility and take the funding lead to

- There is a need to strengthen Métis Institutions to



Minister Clara Morin Dal Col (right) speaking at the conference

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increase the capacity of those institutions to address the determinants that have been identified as increasing risks to children and families.

- There is a greater need for investments in prevention and the need to develop and coordinate wrap around services to support families (denial of housing supports for Métis needs to be addressed).
- There is a need to identify data and share best practices. Identifying Métis children in intake in a significant manner and assist with ensuring that children outside of registered First Nation children have an identity other than 'Other'.
- Any changes to policy or legislation that effect Métis children in care must be done in consultation with the Métis Nation and its governing entities.
- There must be full engagement of Métis families and children and new approaches must respect their culture, heritage and identity in all services and plans.



Ongoing intergovernmental work should involve the federal government and Ontario and the four western most provinces, the MNC and its Governing Members.

“It appears that Budget 2018 will include funding for Indigenous child and family services and it is imperative that the Métis Nation participate fully in it to address this longstanding and growing crisis”, said Vice-President Chartrand. “We also expect the budget to address federal commitments to the Métis Nation in areas such as housing, early learning and child care, and employment and training, all of which are critical in heading off the

conditions that cause family breakdown and apprehension of our children.”

The President of the Women of the Métis Nation, Melanie Omeniho, emphasized that in addition to being a human rights crisis, Indigenous children in care speaks to the need to recognize and implement the rights of Indigenous people to self-determination. She stated:

“As Minister Bennett rightly pointed out, this is a section 35 rights issue, the right of our Métis Nation to protect and secure our Métis families and children. Who can argue with that?”





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## Message from the President

At the center of the existence of the Métis Nation is the wellbeing of its children. With the child as a healthy, well balanced, knowledgeable, educated, cared for and loved nucleus of the Métis Nation, the future of our people and nation is secure.

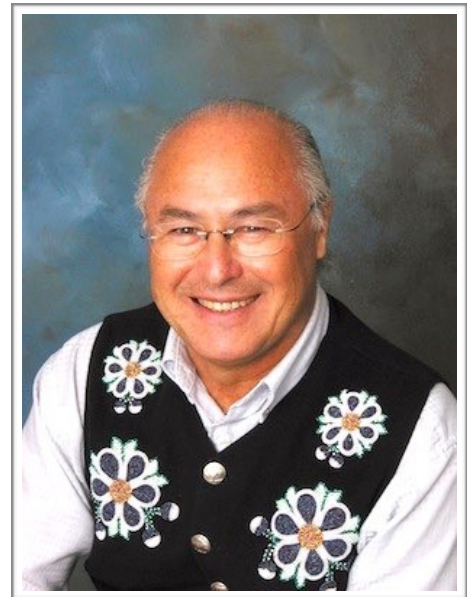
The very essence or core of the Métis Nation is a sense of belonging to a distinct and vibrant people, with its own language, traditions, history, heroes, wars of resistance and grounded in the women of the Métis Nation. With the strengthening of our governments, the recognition of our rights, the current processes of engagement with the Trudeau government and the resurgence of Métis Nationalism, our children are growing up in a more positive atmosphere than what many of us experienced over the lost decades when we were marginalized and ignored.

These dark days included the residential/boarding schools experiences and the 60s scoop,

two major inflictions upon the Métis Nation and its children which still requires redress.

The citizens and governments of the Métis Nation have not however sat idly by. Efforts over the past several decades have been made to address the wellbeing of the Métis child. In 1979, as President of the Canadian Indian Lawyers Association we convened the first of several national Indian Child Welfare Conferences to deal with First Nations, Inuit and Métis children caught up in the insidious provincial government child welfare systems.


In 1987, the first National Métis Child Welfare Conference hosted by the Child and Family Services of Alberta was held in Calgary. The second one followed in 1988 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In 1989 the Native Law Centre in Saskatoon published a monograph (short book) which I wrote, addressing these issues: Well-Being of the Métis Child.



During my second term as President of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan we convened a provincial conference on the well-being of the Métis Child, and held a panel session with representation from the Métis National Council's Governing Members.

In 2010 the Métis National Council held a Well-Being of the Métis Child Conference which produced a ten-year

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## Message from the President

Blueprint meant to guide the Métis Nation governments in addressing the issues confronting the Métis Nation and its children. The Blueprint was subsequently adopted in 2013 by the General Assembly of the Métis National Council for implementation by its governments with provision for periodic reviews.

Over the years, various efforts have been made to deal with our children and counter provincial governments' interference in our families through apprehensions and subsequent foster care or adoptions of our children. The most advanced to date is the devolution by the Manitoba provincial government of child and family services to the Manitoba Métis government. This was a major step in the right direction.

This was done on a distinctions-based approach, an approach which must be maintained as it is the only process that will ultimately result in success for the distinct Indigenous nations

and peoples, who all must have their rights, obligations and authorities restored.

The recent Emergency National Meeting convened by Minister Jane Philpott is a good first step, but only that, a first step. Now that that step has been taken, it is incumbent on all governments, Indigenous, federal, provincial and territorial to move forward in a positive and proactive manner. The Permanent Bilateral Mechanism and resulting Canada-Métis Nation Accord, coupled with the s.35 rights reconciliation process with our Governing Members provide good forums for addressing Métis Nation child welfare issues and the assumption of Métis Nation authority through self-government agreements and fiscal transfer payments to our governments.

With the Métis Nation's March 2018 Métis child and families conference to be held in Winnipeg, the Métis Nation is now in a good position to take

progressive steps forward. Now that we have a willing federal government partner, we need to ensure that the provincial governments from Ontario to British Columbia are also on board and committed to work with us on the path forward.

We cannot achieve a true and lasting reconciliation until and unless we can deal with the many outstanding Métis Nation issues, and in particular the wellbeing of the Métis child, which underpins the successful continued existence of the Métis Nation.

*Rights of the Métis Nation Child* is this year's theme as part of the *Decade of the Métis Nation (2011-2020)*. It is incumbent on our collective leadership and citizen participation to promote, advocate for and secure a positive and long lasting future for our children and their children to come.





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## Canada and Métis Nation Launch Joint Table on Clean Growth and Climate Change




l-r: Andres Filella (MNA), Alisha Kaba (MNO), Manon Soulard (MMF), Kathy Hodgson-Smith (MNC), Dawn Pritchard (MNC), Marshall Birch (MMF), President Clément Chartier, Chris Gall (MNBC), Thomas McCallum (Métis Elder), Minister Catherine McKenna, Ryan Carriere (MNS), Mervin Tex Bouvier (MNS), Jocelyn Gosselin (MNA), Gary Bigger (MNBC), President Melanie Omeniho (Women of the Métis Nation)

On December 18, 2017, Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna and President Chartier met with federal officials and members

of the Métis Nation environment committee in Ottawa to develop a joint work plan for tackling climate change.

The senior-level table being established by the Minister and Métis Nation President results from the Joint Statement of Prime Minister

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Trudeau and President Chartier on the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change on December 9, 2016. The Framework builds on the Paris Agreement where UN member states agreed that they should, when taking action to address climate change, recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.



The Government of Canada's approach to engagement includes its commitment to renewing its nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship with the Métis Nation. The senior-level table enables inclusive and meaningful engagement of the Métis Nation to inform action on the implementation of the Framework.

Following opening remarks by Minister McKenna and President Chartier, senior officials sat down to two days

of discussion on priorities for joint work. These include innovation and clean technology, traditional knowledge protection, climate change adaptation, and mitigation of climate change effects.

Under the process set out in the Joint Statement, Canada and the Métis Nation commit to work together in a collaborative manner to identify meaningful outcomes, and pursue shared goals and commitments. The Canada-Métis Nation Table on Clean

Growth and Climate Change will develop terms of reference and annual work plans for their operation, and will have the ability to form technical working groups that will report to the table as required. Representatives at the table agree to share relevant information and jointly produce proposals, options, and recommendations.





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## Métis Nation General Assembly Prepares for Budget 2018



A special sitting of the MNC General Assembly in Ottawa concluded on December 13, 2017 with delegates focused on the upcoming federal budget and the relationship with the Trudeau government.

Since the last sitting of the General Assembly in July 2017, the Métis Nation has made significant strides in developing its nation-to-nation relationship with Canada. The special sitting of the Assembly

from December 12-13 looked at the progress that has been made since then and some of the challenges and opportunities it faces in the period leading up to the federal budget and the Crown-Métis Nation Summit with the Prime Minister in 2018.

On December 12, President Chartier provided an overview of the work that has occurred with federal Ministers and senior officials under the

Canada-Métis Nation Accord. Minister of Social Development David Chartrand provided an update on a first-year Accord priority, the negotiation of a Métis Nation-specific employment and training accord with Canada under a renewed ASETS program. MNC officials provided delegates with updates on other first-year priorities such as housing, early learning and child care, education, health and new fiscal relations.

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Federal Minister of Indigenous Services Jane Philpott and Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett joined the Assembly in the early afternoon and looked at the new relationship of Canada and the Métis Nation and the work under the Accord from the federal perspective.

The important work being done on Michif language was reviewed by representatives from the Louis Riel Institute and Gabriel Dumont Institute who have taken up this work on behalf of the Métis Nation. The federal government has announced its intention to draft legislation for the protection and promotion of Indigenous languages, including Michif, and the Métis Nation, together with the First Nations and Inuit will be fully engaged in the co-development of this legislation.

Kathy Hodgson-Smith briefed delegates on the establishment of a Canada-Métis Nation climate change table and other environment issues where the federal government is engaging with the Métis Nation. One of these environmental issues is a new federal initiative on Indigenous Protected & Conserved Areas.



This is part of Canada's Target 1 initiative which aims to conserve by 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10% of marine and coastal areas of Canada. Will Goodon from the MNC environment committee and representatives from Parks Canada were on hand to brief delegates on this initiative.

President Melanie Omeniho of Women of the Métis Nation reported on her work on missing and murdered Indigenous women and the

problems surrounding the national inquiry.

On the second day of the General Assembly, each of the MNC's Governing Members provided updates on their section 35 rights tables with the federal government which have been or are being set up toward settlement of historic claims and establishment of self-government. President Chartier and Minister of Finance Chartrand completed the discussions with an eye on a strategy for preparing the Métis Nation for Budget 2018 and the next Summit with the Prime Minister.






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## President Chartier visits MNBC Office



On January 19th, President Chartier met with MNBC President Clara Morin dal Col, who is also the Métis Nation's Minister of Culture and Families, in order to discuss and plan for the upcoming Emergency Child and Family Meeting called by Minister Philpott for January 25-26, 2018 which Vice-President David Chartrand would be leading on behalf of the Métis Nation.

President Chartier and Minister Morin dal Col also discussed the proposed Indigenous Languages Act and the current process leading to the draft legislation and meetings with Minister Joly and federal officials. It was decided that a Committee meeting would be called for February 13-14, 2018 in order to assess where we are at and to ensure that we are fully prepared to meet the draft legislation schedule with a view to having the draft introduced in Parliament later this year.





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## Prosper Mine Hearing in Alberta

On January 15, 2018 the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) held hearing on the proposed Prosper Petroleum Ltd mine which is intended to be build in the proximate vicinity of the Métis community of Fort McKay and the Fort McKay First Nation, locally known as Moose Lake.

The proposed Moose Lake mine site is the last remaining pristine



President Chartier and Fort McKay Métis Communities President Ron Quintal

natural setting adjacent to Fort McKay, where the Métis and First Nations communities carry out their traditional harvesting use and rights. The lakes in that geographic area are the last remaining water bodies where they can harvest fish, as other surrounding waters bodies have been damaged by the pollution from the existing mines that now surround them, but for this last remaining part of their traditional territory which they wish to preserve.

On the morning and early afternoon of the 15<sup>th</sup>, the Fort McKay Métis Community representatives made their interventions, followed by the Fort McKay First Nation. Both the Métis and First Nations communities are opposed to the proposed mine and are seeking to have that last remaining portion of their traditional territory preserved for themselves and future generations.





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## Ile a la Crosse Residential School Issue

On December 2, 2017 approximately 150 former boarding school students met in Ile a la Crosse, which they have done yearly since February 2006. In attendance were President Glen McCallum and Vice-President Gerald Morin of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, as well as President Chartier and Dale LeClair, Chief of Staff, Métis National Council.

The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the letter received by the Boarding School Committee, President Chartier and President McCallum from Minister Carolyn Bennett in which she indicated that the federal government was now prepared to begin meeting with them in order to seek a resolution to this outstanding matter. Minister Bennett also sent the letter to the Saskatchewan Minister of Education as the province has now indicated that they are prepared to participate in seeking a resolution to this longstanding matter.

The former students were pleased that the federal government was finally going to meet to address their issues and provided their continued support to their Committee and also passed a resolution mandating the Métis National Council and the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan to join the effort in a supporting role.

To date, this has been followed up by community meetings of former students at Buffalo Narrows on December 20<sup>th</sup> and La Loche on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 50 former students from Buffalo Narrows attended the December meeting and elected a new representative to the Committee as the previous representative was no



longer able to continue. At the La Loche meeting with approximately 40 former students attending, their current representative was provided a mandate to continue doing so.

President Chartier attended both of those meetings and provided updates on where the Committee is at in the process, as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools settlement agreement concluded in 2017.





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## Pinehouse Meeting



l-r: Lisa McCallum, President Chartier, Tom Isaac, Glen McCallum, Richard Quintal

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, President Chartier attended a meeting on northwest Saskatchewan held in Pinehouse, hosted by the Métis Local and municipal government of which Mike Natomagan is both Local President and Mayor. President

Glen McCallum, also of Pinehouse was instrumental in having the meeting take place in that village.

A majority of the Local Presidents from the North West Saskatchewan Métis Council,

along with their Regional Directors were in attendance, as were a majority of the Provincial Métis Council. A large number of Elders from the community also attended, as well as other Métis Elders and citizens from northwest

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Saskatchewan.

President McCallum provided an update on where matters now stand with the MNS since their 2017 May election, including the engagement processes with the federal government and the s.35 rights reconciliation process and pending MOU which will lead to a Framework Agreement for negotiating land and self-government rights, including the North West Saskatchewan Métis Council (NWSMC) and their pursuit of their land rights and self-government.



President Chartier spoke on the history of the work done by the Métis in northwest Saskatchewan, including the Protocol Agreement signed in February 1996 by the MNS on behalf of the northwest Locals with the northwest Saskatchewan municipal government Mayors where they agreed to work together to pursue a Métis land base and self-government. This led to the establishment of the Northern Project under the MNS tripartite process addressing land and self-government and the

establishment in 1997 of the NWSMC for that purpose.

President Chartier also provided copies of materials provided by the NWSMC Co-Chairs, Glen McCallum and Chester Herman, to MSR Tom Isaac in 2015 as part of his work on recommending s.35 rights reconciliation between the federal government and the Métis Nation.

Tom Isaac, who was recently retained by the MNS as their lead negotiator on the new s.35 rights reconciliation initiative

was also present and provided an overview of the work that would be entailed going forward. Terry Tobias, an expert in traditional resources use mapping was also present and spoke to the work he has done for the community over the years and the current mapping that is currently taking place in Pinehouse.

Prior to the conclusion of the session, the MNS Executive and Mayor Natomagan presented Tom with a pair of mitts made of bear hide, as well as a sash.





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## La Loche Shooting Second Anniversary



On January 22, 2018 President Chartier joined the community of La Loche in marking the second anniversary of the tragic shooting at a village residence and the High School.

The day began at 10:30 am with a church service at the local Catholic church, followed by a lunch at the community hall. Following lunch Mayor Robert St. Pierre make a short speech, followed by the rosary in Dene and then an afternoon of gospel music.





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## President Chartier attends PMC Meeting in Saskatoon



On January 13<sup>th</sup>, President Chartier attended the Provincial Métis Council meeting in Saskatoon and provided an update on national developments.

Mayor Robert St. Pierre was also in attendance and provided an update on the situation in La Loche in light of the January 22, 2016 shooting deaths in his village and the proposed second anniversary activities to mark that tragic event. The PMC then offered a prayer of condolence for the Mayor and the community.







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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Métis Nation Environment Committee Meeting Feb 2-3 Vancouver, BC
- Michif Language Committee meeting Feb 13-14 Vancouver, BC
- MHRDA Working Group Meeting Feb 15-16 Toronto, ON
- Métis Nation Health Forum Feb 26-27 Ottawa, ON
- Métis Rights Panel Meeting March 8-9 Saskatoon, SK
- Métis Nation Education Conference March 20-21 Vancouver, BC
- Michif Conference March 22-23 Vancouver, BC
- Métis Nation Child & Family Services Conference March 26-28 Winnipeg, MB



2018: Rights of the Métis Nation Child





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