



Métis Nation



March 2019

How has the SNC-Lavalin Affair affected the Relationship of the Métis Nation with the Trudeau government?

—*A Statement by President Clément Chartier of the Métis National*

(February 20, 2019) Amidst the controversy over the SNC-Lavalin Affair, there has been a recurring suggestion that the resignation of a female Indigenous Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada speaks to a deteriorating relationship between the Trudeau Government and Indigenous peoples.

Let me set the facts straight as far as the Métis Nation's relationship with Canada is concerned. Prior to coming to office, Justin Trudeau committed a Liberal government to work together with the Métis Nation to build a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship in order to reach meaningful reconciliation and achieve positive results for Métis people. During the past three years we have worked closely with the Prime Minister and a number of dedicated and passionate federal ministers such as Carolyn Bennett, Jane Philpott, Jean-Yves Duclos and Patty Hadju, amongst others, to make that bold commitment come true.

We have moved quickly on the settlement of the long outstanding land claim of the Manitoba Metis Federation and toward self-government agreements for Métis governments across our homeland. In a true spirit of reconciliation and collaboration, we have co-developed policies to improve social and economic conditions for Métis people, resulting in unprecedented federal investments in priority areas like housing and early learning and child care.

All Canadians including citizens of the Métis Nation will have to make up their own minds on the Trudeau government in this election year. What I will say is that none of the issues surrounding the treatment of an engineering firm alters the fundamental relationship between the Trudeau government and the Métis Nation.

More than any other government in Canada's history, the Trudeau government has striven to bring the Métis people into the federation and as full participants into the social life and economy of our great country. We stand with the Prime Minister and his government in maintaining and building on this relationship and expanding opportunities for our people to have a better life in Canada.





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Métis Nation Supports Indigenous Languages Act



Photo: Minister Morin Dal Col (center) addresses the media on Indigenous Languages Bill, Minister Rodriguez (left), and AFN NC Bellegarde (right)

February 5, 2019 (Ottawa, ON)
– The Métis Nation welcomes the legislation introduced today in the House of Commons and the effect it will have on the protection and promotion of the Michif language, the national language of the Métis people and Nation.

“The bill marks a giant first step in Canada’s support for our longstanding struggle to preserve, revitalize and promote the use of Michif which has been the most neglected of Canada’s Indigenous languages,” said Métis Nation Minister of Heritage and Culture Clara Morin dal Col. “I wish to

commend the Government of Canada for enabling the Métis Nation to participate in the co-development of this legislation.”

Language and culture are among the priorities of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord which the Métis Nation leadership signed with the Prime Minister in 2017

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toward the renewal of the Métis Nation-Crown relationship on a nation-to-nation, government-to-government basis.

“We salute the Prime Minister for acting on this priority,” said Métis Nation President Clément Chartier. “The bill recognizes that the rights

related to Indigenous languages are among the rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982 so this is reconciliation in action.”

Indigenous Languages Bill:

<http://www.metisnation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Indigenous-Languages-Bill.pdf>



Group photo after Minister Rodriguez announced the Indigenous Languages Bill at the House of Common Gallery





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President Chartier meets with House of Commons Heritage Committee to support Indigenous languages bill

On February 19, 2019, MNC President Chartier spoke by videoconference to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage that is studying Bill C-91, An Act respecting Indigenous Languages. The Métis Nation supports the legislation that was introduced in the House of Commons on February 5 and the effect it will have on the protection and promotion of the Michif language, the national language of the Métis people and Nation. The legislation was co-developed by Canada, the Métis Nation and First Nations.



President Chartier corrected Heritage Committee member Georgina Jolibois (MP) who identified two historic Métis communities in her constituency in northwestern

Saskatchewan, Isle a la Crosse and La Loche, as Cree and Dene communities respectively. Census 2016 data shows the Métis composing 75% of the

population of Isle a la Crosse and close to 50% of the population of La Loche.

see exchange in video:

<http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/news/president-chartier-meets-with-house-of-commons-heritage-committee-to-support-indigenous-languages-bill>





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Message from the President

As citizens of the Métis Nation, and in my case, one of the democratically elected leaders of the Métis Nation government, we must always be vigilant in the defence of our people, homeland and right to exist. This includes safeguarding our identity, culture, heritage and language.

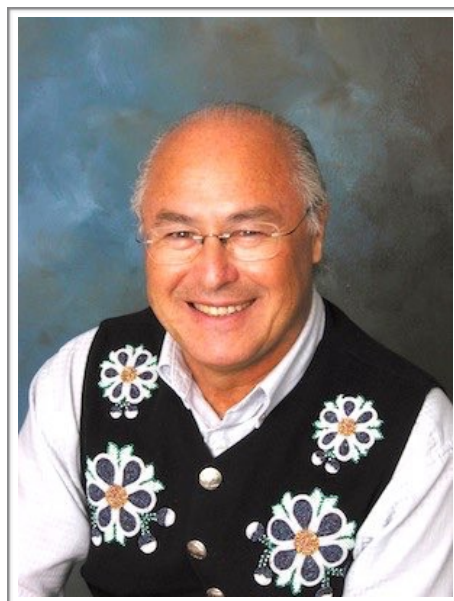
Unfortunately, we continue to find ourselves facing resistance to our existence as a distinct Indigenous people with our own homeland, not only from non-Indigenous people but from some Indigenous peoples as well.

At a recent international conference on Indigenous peoples and human rights held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Chair, a prominent First Nations national and international advocate, was overheard talking to another First Nations leader scoffing at the notion that in addition to welcoming conference attendees to the traditional territory of Treaty One, the speaking notes also mentioned a welcome to the Homeland of the Métis Nation. Needless to say, there was no reference to the Métis Nation made by that individual.

At a recent appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Heritage, following

my opening remarks, a Dene NDP Member of Parliament from northern Saskatchewan disputed my reference to La Loche and Ile a la Crosse being Métis villages. In her view they are Dene and Cree communities respectively as Dene is spoken in La Loche and Cree in Ile a la Crosse. Certainly, there are many individuals and/or communities within the Métis Nation homeland, including Métis villages where Dene, Cree and Saulteau are spoken, but this does not mean they cease to be Métis.

It is the aim of the newly proposed Indigenous Languages Act to enable the revitalization, recuperation and use of the Michif language by Métis Nation citizens, while at the same time encouraging the same for those of our citizens who speak other Indigenous languages. With less than one thousand Michif speakers still alive, many of whom are well over the age of 65 and concentrated in southeastern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba according to the last census, it is necessary for this work to begin immediately. The adoption of the Act by Parliament and the securing of the necessary financing will be of significant help in making the retention and revitalization of Michif and other Indigenous languages a reality.



While we continue on the road of rebuilding the Métis Nation, including the exercise of its right of self-determination, including the right to a land base and self-government, it is critical that we continue to revitalize, exercise and strengthen our cultural practices and customs, and in particular the recuperation and use of Michif which is facing potential extinction.

Finally, we cannot simply sit back and remain silent when our right to exist as a distinct Indigenous people is questioned or denied. It is our responsibility and duty to speak out.





March 2019

An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Children, Youth and Families introduced in Parliament



February 28, 2019 (Ottawa, ON)
Today the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Métis National Council, and other Indigenous leaders joined in a celebration in Ottawa to mark the

introduction of Bill C-92 in Parliament.

Indigenous Services Minister, Seamus O'Regan, introduced Bill C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families.

Co-developed with Indigenous partners, this bill seeks to affirm Indigenous peoples' inherent right to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services.

The over-representation of Indigenous children in care is a

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crisis: First Nation, Inuit and Métis children represent just 7.7% of all children under 15 in Canada, and yet they make up 52.2% of children in foster care according to Census 2016.

The current approach too often sees Indigenous children separated from their families and communities on the basis of poverty, inter-generational trauma and culturally biased child welfare. This proposed bill seeks to reform this approach and promotes a shift from apprehension to a system built around preventative care.

Bill C-92 establishes principles that include the best interests of the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality. These principles would guide how services are delivered to Indigenous children in all jurisdictions and regions of the country, while aiming to reduce the number of children in care.

This proposed Bill seeks to affirm the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to exercise jurisdiction over First Nations, Inuit and Métis child and family services, support communities in pursuing self-determination and in making their own laws

regarding child and family services. It is designed to increase efforts to address the root causes of child apprehension, and to reunite children with their parents, extended families, communities and nations.

It is also consistent with the Government of Canada's commitments to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Bill C-92 is the culmination of extensive engagements with partners, which began with the January 2018 Emergency Meeting on Indigenous Child and Family Services. As a result, the federal government committed to six points of action to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care, including exploring the co-development of legislation on Indigenous child and family services. Engagement with Indigenous partners, provinces, territories, and experts is

ongoing, and will continue after the Bill receives Royal Assent.

Quotes:

“With the introduction of Bill C-92 today, we mark an historic turning point for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and families. Bill C-92 will finally put in law what Indigenous peoples across this country have been asking of governments for decades: that their inherent jurisdiction over child and family services be affirmed so that they can decide what is best for their children, their families, and their communities. The overrepresentation of Indigenous children in foster care in this country is a crisis, and we cannot sit idly by. While Ottawa can be a place of partisanship – I know that Parliamentarians of all stripes would agree that this work is well beyond our divisions. An entire generation of Indigenous children and youth are counting on us get this right. We cannot let them down.”

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous Services

“Indigenous children and youth

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have the right to be raised as proud First Nations, Métis or Inuit citizens. Children's wellbeing, resilience and self-esteem depend upon a secure, personal and cultural identity. This proposed legislation enables Indigenous communities to support their families and keep children in their communities according to their laws, traditional practices and customs. Today, we are taking concrete steps to address the tragedy of the disproportionate numbers of indigenous children in the child welfare system and work towards a better future for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth."

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

"This legislation is first and foremost about First Nations children and their safety, their security and their future. The tragedy of thousands of First Nations children in care tells us we need a new approach. This legislation will recognize First Nations jurisdiction so they can build their own systems based on their own governance, laws and policies. Our focus has to be on prevention over apprehension, and keeping

children close to their cultures and families. We need investments to support this work, and we need everyone to support this approach. The time is long overdue for First Nations to finally regain responsibility over our children."

Perry Bellegarde
National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

"I am encouraged by ITK's relationship with Minister Seamus O'Regan and the Department of Indigenous Services, and anticipate further discussions between Inuit leadership and government as this legislation moves forward. With today's announcement, the level of ambition of both Inuit and government have aligned to do more to protect Inuit children."

Natan Obed
President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

"Time is of the essence in acting on the crisis of Métis children in care and ensuring the right of Métis governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies. The proposed legislation is a necessary and long overdue first step to achieve that."

Clément Chartier
President, Métis National Council

Quick facts:

According to Census 2016, Indigenous children represent 52.2% of children in foster care in private homes in Canada, but account for only 7.7% of the overall population of children under 15.

The first five Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada relate to child welfare, including Call to Action #4 which calls "upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation".

Budget 2016 included new funding of \$634.8 million over five years, and Budget 2018 included new funding of \$1.4 billion over six years in the First Nations Child and Family Services Program to ensure the safety, security and well-being of Indigenous children.

In 2018-2019, the total First Nations Child and Family Services Program funding under Indigenous Services Canada is more than \$1.1 billion.





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Second Métis Nation Health Forum held in Ottawa



On February 13-15, 2019, the Métis National Council held the second Métis Nation Health Forum at the historic Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. Building on the success of last year's Forum, this year's event attracted over 120 invited delegates and presenters from the Métis National Council and Governing Members, the

Governments of Canada, Saskatchewan and British Columbia (BC), and five Pan Canadian Health Organizations (PCHOs) including the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) the Canadian Partnership Against Canada (CPAC), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), the

Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI), and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC).

With an overarching theme of **Advancing Métis Nation Health**, the goal of this year's Forum was to highlight ways in which we can work together to

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improve Métis Nation health and well-being, through the application of best practices, coordinated collaborative action, and strategic investments.

Métis Elder Oliver Boulette opened the Forum with a prayer, and MNC Minister of Health Clara Morin Dal Col provided welcoming remarks and later closed the Forum by thanking all those who had attended and contributed. Will Goodon, MMF, and Dale Drown, MNBC, shared the role of Event Chair and Moderator throughout.



MNC Minister of Health Clara Morin Dal Col

MNC Vice-President David Chartrand launched the Forum discussions with an opening presentation which focused attention on Métis Nation health needs and priorities, which was followed by a



MNC Vice-President David Chartrand

keynote address from Thomas Isaac, an internationally recognized legal authority in the area of Indigenous law, who spoke about Métis Nation Section 35 rights and self-determination, including in the area of health.

The Co-Chair of the Métis Nation-Canada Joint Health Committee (JHC) Dr Valerie Gideon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) then described joint progress to date and the federal commitment to advancing Métis Nation health, within the context of the 10-Year Métis Nation Health Policy Framework and associated 2019 budget submission.

These opening presentations set the stage for the comprehensive panel discussions that took

place over the next two days which showcased Métis Nation best practices, and Governing Members' ongoing efforts to address key health challenges through targeted programs and services, and the development of strategic partnerships at the provincial and national levels. Specific topics covered Métis Nation health determinants, strengthening Métis Nation health data systems, best practices in health promotion and disease prevention, mental health and addictions, chronic disease, and supporting vulnerable Citizens, including those with disabilities and the elderly.

The panel discussions were interspersed with keynote presentations from Métis Nation Governing Members, partners, and senior representatives from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the First Nations Inuit and Health Branch (FNIHB), Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and the PCHOs. The end of the second day was brought to a rousing close with Métis dancing provided by local Métis

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dancers “The Jiglets”, accompanied by well-known Métis musicians Oliver Boulette on fiddle and Jerry McIvor on guitar.

The final half-day of the Forum provided an important opportunity for delegates to hear about and discuss the ISC transformation currently underway, and to talk with existing and potential new partners about how best to engage and work with the Métis Nation in pursuit of the shared goal of achieving better Métis Nation health and well-being over the next 10 years.

The feedback received from all Forum delegates was extremely positive, with many commenting on how much they had gained from the experience and the opportunity to meet with and learn about the excellent work being done by the MNC and Governing Members to advance Métis Nation health.

There have been many gems that I have gathered from this Métis Nation Health Forum, including an understanding culture and history

and the unique needs that the Métis Nation have, particularly related to health and the holistic approach taken related to social determinants of health. A key phrase that sticks in my mind came from the opening keynote by Thomas Isaac, who said: “How can we reconcile if we do not know each other?”. For us, as an organization very early on in our journey of working together with Indigenous Peoples across Canada, this has been such a wonderful entry point to starting to build relationships with the Métis Nation.

Carol Fancott, Director, Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI)

CIHI was really excited and privileged to be invited to this Forum. We are here to learn and to understand the health and the health needs of the Métis Nation, and to then see where CIHI might be able to support the needs.

Jean Harvey, Director, Canadian Population Health Initiative, Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)

It's really an honor to be here at the second annual Métis Nation Health

Forum and to see all of the exciting work that's happened over the past year. The opportunities of really advancing the health of all Métis citizens and their families to improve the health outcomes are just incredible. The Métis National Council has done a lot of work over the past year and I'm just so pleased to be a part of that!

Pam Tobin, Director, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Strategy Implementation, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC)

I certainly have enjoyed every minute of the Forum, it's been very informative, especially as we are building a new relationship with the Métis Nation. It's crucial that we be here to understand and hear the realities on the ground from the Governing Members and the Métis Nation as a whole, so that we can move forward in the best way possible in setting that new ground and building that relationship with the Métis Nation.

Stephanie O'Brien, Director of Reconciliation and Relationships, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB)





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Métis Nation Conference on Traditional Knowledge



The Métis National Council hosted a two-day symposium in Vancouver from February 20-21, 2019, on Métis Nation Knowledge Systems, Traditional Knowledge and the role of Indigenous knowledge in protecting the environment. Over 100 Métis representatives and guests gathered at the Pinnacle Harbourfront Hotel.

Keynote speakers included Jennifer Tamil-Corpus, from the Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines, who spoke to the international protection of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expression. Professor James Hopkins from the University of Arizona shared with Métis Nation environment officials and technicians his

experience with witnessing the extinction of the Yaqui Catfish and its effect on the Yaqui Pueblo. Speakers also included Preston Hardison, from the Tulalip Tribes of Washington and Rita Bouvier, a Métis scholar from Saskatchewan who spoke to the role of Indigenous languages in creating knowledge systems.

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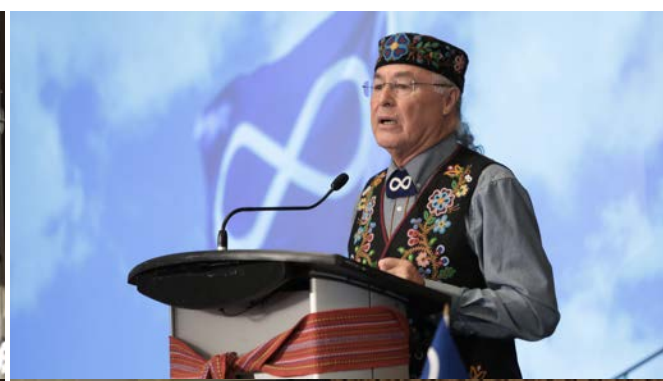


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The Métis National Council hosted several meetings in Vancouver all week on biodiversity, Species at Risk, climate change and the environment. The Métis Nation has recently engaged in a

nation-to-nation relationship with the Government of Canada. It is currently working with various agencies to create a longer-term strategic plan for the Métis Nation in the areas of policy development,

community-based climate change monitoring, and knowledge systems design to support work already under way with Environment and Climate Change Canada.





March 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| • Federal Budget Day | March 19 | Ottawa, ON |
| • MNBC Governing Assembly | March 22-24 | Vancouver, BC |
| • Métis Rights Panel (MRP) meeting | April 2-3 | Vancouver, BC |
| • MN-S Legislative Assembly (MNLA) | April 12-14 | Regina SK |
| • United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues | April 22-May 3 | NYC |
| • Nature Champions Summit | April 24-25 | Montreal, QC |
| • Canada Youth Summit | May 2-3 | Ottawa, ON |
| • MMF Fundraiser event | May 12 | Winnipeg, MB |
| • Open Government Partnership (OGP) Global Summit | May 29-31 | Ottawa, ON |

Engagement Sessions for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors

Manitoba Metis Federation
 March 15-17, 2019 – Swan River, Manitoba
 March 22-24, 2019 – Winnipeg, Manitoba

Métis Nation of Alberta
 March 29-31, 2019 – Edmonton, Alberta

Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
 April 5-7, 2019 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Métis Nation of Ontario
 April 12-14, 2019 – Toronto, Ontario

Métis Nation British Columbia
 April 26-28, 2019 – Richmond, British Columbia





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