Recently the presidents of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and Métis Nation of Alberta issued a press release following a “tri-council” meeting of the three Governing Members. The tri-council presidents signed a number of documents asserting the sole authority of Governing Members, not the MNC, to conduct self-government negotiations with Canada and to deliver programs and services to Métis Nation citizens. They also called for more transparency and accountability from the MNC and the creation of a working group to explore potential reform of the MNC or its replacement by a new national body. They have now written to Minister Bennett seeking her intervention in the internal affairs of the Métis Nation.

As National Spokesperson of MNC as well as President of the MMF, I believe I am in a unique position to address these matters and set the record straight for an honest assessment of where the Métis Nation stands today. First, let’s be clear on what the MNC is and what it isn’t.

Contrary to the three presidents’ expressed concerns over MNC involvement in self-government talks or service delivery, the MNC has no role in either of these matters. The only self-government negotiations with Canada are those between Canada and Governing Members. Moreover, the MNC has no role in the delivery of programs and services. The MNC did play an important role in securing more than $2 billion in funding for Métis Nation programs and services from recent federal budgets but the agreements covering these
federal investments all make it clear that the Governing Members are solely responsible for the delivery of these programs. So why make an issue of something that doesn’t exist?

The real issue is the failure of the MNO to comply with the Métis Nation’s citizenship rules embodied in the National Definition and the failure of the three presidents to fulfil their fiduciary duties as members of the MNC Board of Governors to enforce its bylaws and resolutions of the General Assembly. The importance of our National Definition and citizenship rules cannot be overstated. They are the glue that holds our nation together and the MNC most definitely has an important role to play in their enforcement.

The Métis Nation created the MNC in 1983 to protect and strengthen the integrity of our identity as a distinct people and nation. This action marked the determination of the Métis Nation to represent ourselves in the pursuit of self-determination and self-government and never again be grouped within pan-Aboriginal political bodies. Toward this end, the MNC General Assembly, comprised of elected representative from all Governing Members, adopted important resolutions over the decades, establishing the National Definition in 2002 that is entrenched in each Governing Member’s Constitution, and defining the boundaries of our historic Homeland.

The General Assembly also adopted a resolution suspending the MNO for its failure to adhere to the National Definition unless it complied with certain conditions by the end of November 2019 which it failed to do. One would think that the three presidents at the tri-council meeting, with its expressed purpose of identifying common priorities for moving ahead on self-government, would have addressed MNO’s serious breach of our citizenship, the cornerstone of a self-government system.

Instead, they studiously avoided it, with the exception of a casual claim in a “Whereas” clause that they all have “objectively verifiable registry systems that identify legitimate Métis rights-holders and citizens of the Métis Nation”. How would they know that in view of MNO’s longstanding policy of grandfathering its members from the application of the National Definition? If President Froh is convinced she has a verifiable registry system, why did she refuse to permit a review of her registry as required by the General Assembly?

The documents signed by the presidents are replete with nationalist rhetoric but this should be no cover for what is really happening. It has long been evident to historic Métis Nation citizens in western Canada that the MNO is largely a non-Métis Nation body, in other words a pan-Aboriginal organization. We know that in our hearts and minds. MNO representatives themselves have admitted a large part of their membership would not meet the National Definition. This is why MNO has refused to open its registry for review as required by the General Assembly.

In the year since the adoption of the suspension resolution by the
General Assembly, President Froh and the two other presidents have pressed repeatedly for Board meetings where they could, behind closed doors, reverse the decision of the General Assembly and undermine the will of the Métis Nation to protect its citizenship. How does this fit with their call for more transparency and accountability at the MNC? Instead of fulfilling their duties as MNC executive members to implement the resolution of the General Assembly on the most critically important function of our governance system, they have collaborated in a way that undermines our national identity.

President Poitras may have found a reliable ally in MNO in her battles with MNC leadership since her defeat in MNC presidential elections but how does she reconcile that with her responsibilities to Métis Nation citizens in Alberta? How can she justify denial of citizenship to those in Alberta who do not meet the National Definition including many long-time members and then turn a blind eye to another Governing Member admitting thousands of non-Métis into our governance system? How can the President and Vice-President of MN-S, both passionate co-sponsors of the MNO suspension resolution, keep a straight face when explaining their reversal of position? Will they come clean on the backroom deal that made this possible?

The MMF has watched these developments with growing concern. In fact, the MMF Cabinet and Annual General Assembly of 3,000 delegates adopted a resolution mandating the withdrawal of MMF from MNC if it fails to take the steps needed to protect the citizenship and boundaries of the historic Métis Nation. Let’s again be clear on this matter.

Further to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in 2013 upholding our land claim, we are negotiating a settlement with Canada including self-government. We did not support the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreements approach adopted by the tri-council members and Canada for a number of reasons. Contrary to the claims of the tri-council presidents, their agreements do not recognize the three as governments but establish a process to do so and even then limits the law making authority to be recognized to internal governance matters such as electoral matters and internal structures.

Moreover, the agreements allow...
each Governing Member to establish its own citizenship rules in flagrant violation of our commitment to a common citizenship as one people and one nation. The willingness of the tri-council presidents to accept these terms, together with their refusal to take action against the MNO, has reinforced our concern. The presidents increasingly speak of their governance bodies as distinct nations unto themselves, forgetting that we are one people and one nation. After all their backroom deals and betrayals, they have forgotten who they are.

After the dispatch of federal troops to Red River in 1870 and the Saskatchewan valley in 1885, we are now faced with a third invasion from the east, this time by self-styled “Métis” groups springing up all over Atlantic Canada, Québec and Ontario. They have no connection historically, culturally or politically with the Métis Nation in western Canada but seek to usurp our hard won rights. We will not allow the MNO to become the gateway for this new eastern invasion.

The tri-council presidents’ proposal to reform the MNC or create a new national structure should be seen for what it is: an attempt to go back to a pan-Aboriginal national organization. Neither the MMF nor Métis nationalists in the rest of western Canada will ever support going back to what we left behind in 1983. And if change is to occur at the national level, it will be through the will of the General Assembly.

It is time to rally all patriots of the Métis Nation in defence of our Homeland. Toward that end, the MNC will hold a gathering on Identity, Citizenship and Homeland in Saskatoon on March 9 and 10, 2020. I am asking all elected leaders from the four western provinces including Presidents Poitras, McCallum and Dal Col and their respective Boards to join me and the MMF Cabinet at the event. I encourage all members of the General Assembly and indeed all Métis Nation citizens to participate. The stakes have never been higher.

Marsi

Thank you.
MNC PRESS RELEASE - January 20, 2020

Métis Nation Citizenship - the Real Issue

On January 16, 2020, Presidents Margaret Froh of Ontario, Audrey Poitras of Alberta, and Glen McCallum of Saskatchewan signed a document and issued a press release that undermines the integrity of the Métis Nation. The document they signed was not a Métis National Council (MNC) resolution. Nor was this document endorsed by the Assemblies of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) or Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA). The Presidents signed without any Assembly debates or votes by representatives of the grassroots citizens.

In their release they have completely avoided direct discussion of the real issue of Ontario Citizenship. This is about the failure of Ontario to comply with the Métis National Definition and the failure of MN-S and MNA Presidents to comply with their executive responsibilities. Instead they have assailed the very definition and identity of the Métis Nation and endangered its integrity and its future. To clarify the issues and defend the descendants of the historic Métis Nation, the MNC, as the Métis Nation's national voice, is issuing this press release.

The Métis Nation is a distinct Indigenous People in Western Canada. We have always determined who our Citizens are. We have fought to protect our identity and our rights. These struggles, to name only a few, include the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks (Victory of the Frog Plain); the 1849 Sayer Trial; the events leading to the 1870 creation of Manitoba; and the 1885 Battle of Batoche. Our Ancestors paid a very heavy price for their families’ future. Today, with our Ancestors’ legacy, we have the passion, strength, and perseverance to stand for what is right.

The struggles of our Ancestors culminated in the inclusion of the Métis in s. 35 of the 1982 Canadian Constitution as one of three Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. In 1983 the Métis Nation formed the Métis National Council, as an expression and instrument of Métis nationalism and the quest of our people for self-government within the Canadian federation and never again to be grouped within pan-Aboriginal political bodies. Today, after many hard-won battles in the field, in the courts, and in the political fora, three Presidents are now undermining the strength and democracy of the Nation.

The actions of these Presidents are in direct conflict with the Métis National Definition that all of the MNC Governing Members agreed to in 2002 – almost twenty years ago. This National Definition was agreed to by all Citizens through their Assemblies and is now in each Governing Member’s Constitution. The National Definition was adopted to ensure the Métis Nation has objectively verifiable standards.
and processes to identify our Citizens. Ontario has not followed the definition as adopted by the people of the Métis Nation.

In November 2018, the MNC General Assembly, in which all Governing Members participated, passed a resolution making it clear that Ontario was acting contrary to the definition. The resolution required Ontario’s compliance, putting Ontario on probation for one-year pending suspension if it did not follow the definition, and Ontario participation in a process that would examine Ontario’s registry and verify compliance with the definition.

In a second resolution, the General Assembly defined the boundaries of our historic Homeland which was accepted by and binding on all Governing Members. Ontario has chosen to flagrantly disregard both resolutions of the Assembly.

The Presidents have the fiduciary obligation to act in the best interests of the MNC and are required to comply with its bylaws. This includes following the Métis National Definition and the subsequent resolutions concerning Ontario’s lack of respect for the definition. Their actions are not only inconsistent with, but in direct contradiction to, their responsibilities.

By not following the Métis National Definition, Ontario is, wrongfully, purporting to grant Métis Nation Citizenship to people living in eastern Ontario who are not part of the Métis Nation. Their communities in which they live are shamefully and wrongly claimed to be part of the historic Métis Nation. These communities are not, have never been, and can never be a part of our Métis Nation’s history and Homeland.

The swamping of the Métis Nation by non-Métis people from Eastern Canada was foreseen by Louis Riel. He feared they would take away our lands and resources, and deny us our rights. There was an invasion after 1870 and another after 1885. Now, with the actions of Ontario, we are confronted by the prospect of a third invasion. This is the most dangerous because these new invaders, self-styled “Métis” groups, are springing up all over Ontario, Québec, and Atlantic Canada. They have no connection historically, culturally or politically with the Métis Nation in western Canada, but seek to usurp our hard-fought rights.

The actions of these three individuals are circumventing the definition of the Métis Nation, which amounts to cultural appropriation. This promotes Métis identity theft. This group is putting at risk the birthright of generations of our children. They are sacrificing our People’s future.

During the last several years, the Métis Nation has been very successful in bringing new investments into the Métis Nation for the benefit of today and future generations. Now, the unwillingness of these people to honour the democratic decisions of the Métis Nation is putting at risk all of these hard-fought gains.

As we begin celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Métis Nation bringing our Homeland into Confederation, we strengthen our resolve to defend the integrity of our Nation and our Citizenship.
Celebrations are always a good thing! 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Métis Nation of what is now western Canada joining the Canadian federation through the creation of the province of Manitoba as Canada's fifth province, coupled with the remainder of our nation joining as the Northwest Territories. As a new Indigenous nation coming into being in our historic homeland over several centuries with a distinct culture, language, flag, sense of solidarity and political will we also have cause to celebrate our successes, not solely to mark the event as fact of history.

With the staunch defence of our nation's rights in 1869/70, including our rights to land, self-government and to exist as a people, the Provisional Government led by President Louis Riel successfully negotiated the entry of our nation into Canada through the Manitoba Act 1870, accompanied by the Rupert's Land Order 1870 by which the rest of our homeland became a part of Canada. This was no small feat on the part of our past leaders, citizens and patriots.

While we subsequently endured many hardships after 1870, including the dispossession from our lands and resources through the maladministration of the land provisions of the Manitoba Act and the scrip process administered under the Dominion Lands Act and the many myriad negative actions by the federal government for well over 100 years we have finally over the past few decades made substantial progress in reclaiming our rightful place within Canada. A place we should have been guaranteed in 1870 and onward.

With the hard and dedicated work of our leaders and communities in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, we finally once again gained a foothold within Canadian society. With the patriation of the Constitution from Great Britain in 1982 and the inclusion of the s. 35 recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal rights and subsequent victories in the courts our re-emergence as a people once again took root, and flourished. Much of this can be attributed to the resilience of our people who through the dark period of our life hung on to their culture, language, hope and sense of nationhood and collective aspirations for a better future.

That better future is now. Great strides have been made in our social, cultural, economic and political existence as a people.
Great pride is deeply rooted in our customs and traditions, grounded in our homeland in western Canada, from British Columbia to northwestern Ontario and the Northwest Territories in the north. One people, one nation, one homeland!

Yes, we have cause to celebrate the 150th anniversary of joining Canada, particularly with the great progress we have made in the relationship between the Métis Nation and Canada as evidenced by the unprecedented gains we have made both politically and economically with the enhanced government-to-government relationship with the Trudeau government and the over 2 billion dollars provided to Métis Nation citizens through their Métis governments over the past two federal budgets.

I encourage all Métis Nation citizens and Métis government leaders to join the Manitoba Métis government in celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Métis Nation joining Canada as it 5th province: the province of Manitoba.

Decade of the
Métis Nation

2011-2020

2020: Year of the Métis Nation
On December 5, 2019, the Métis National Council (MNC) applauded the contents of the latest Federal Throne Speech, delivered by Governor General, Julie Payette.

“Much like his choice of cabinet appointments, this throne speech shows that Prime Minister Trudeau is committed to unity and bringing people in this country together,” said MNC Vice-President and National Spokesperson David Chartrand. “I know the Métis Nation shares that commitment and we look forward to doing our part to continue creating a prosperous and unified Canada for all Citizens.”

The MNC is particularly pleased to see the Federal Government is committed to taking action to co-develop and introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the first year of the new mandate. UNDRIP recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to legal equality, self-determination, the preservation of their languages and control of
their traditional lands, among other rights.

“It’s no secret, in his last mandate we saw great things out of Justin Trudeau when it comes reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and in particular, the Métis,” said Vice-President Chartrand. “I look forward to working closely with this government and all members of Parliament, including the opposition, as they continue to work towards a better relationship with Canada’s negotiating partner in Confederation.”

Another highlight of the speech for the MNC, is a commitment to work with Indigenous communities to close the infrastructure gap by 2030 and to take new steps to ensure the government is living up to the spirit and intent of treaties.

“This is a battle we wage daily in the province my people founded,” added Vice-President Chartrand. “While we have a premier who has the audacity to not acknowledge our rightful place at the table, I am delighted to see a Prime Minister who understands the history of the Métis and our rights.”
Métis Nation Sets Stage for Economic Development Summit

The MNC and Governing Members, together with officials from the Governing Members’ ISETS (employment and training) and capital corporations (business development) operations, met in Vancouver on December 5, 2019, to advance the planning of the a Métis Economic Development Conference in Vancouver on March 4-5, 2020.

Earlier economic development conferences brought the Métis Nation leadership and economic development specialists together with federal and provincial government ministers and industry leaders to discuss the development of a Métis Nation economic development strategy and build on best practices to advance the economic priorities of the Métis Nation. These conferences contributed to the
signing of the Métis Economic Development Accord in 2015 which was resourced by a $25 million federal investment by the Trudeau government in its first budget in 2016.

This was followed by the signing of a Canada-Métis Nation Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Development in 2018 which expanded the scope of the Métis Nation economic development strategy to encompass the following priorities:

1. Access to capital for Métis Nation entrepreneurs and financial institutions;

2. Access of Métis businesses to procurement opportunities of the federal government and potentially the federally regulated sector of the Canadian economy;

3. Enhancing economic and business infrastructure of Métis Nation communities;

4. Métis participation in major economic and resource development projects including support for Métis Nation equity participation in these projects;

5. Access of Métis Nation initiated projects to Canada’s infrastructure, green infrastructure and clean growth spend;

6. Strengthening the role of Métis Nation institutions in advancing economic development; and

7. Expanding partnerships with federal departments and agencies, provinces, and the private sector including the continuation of the Métis Economic Development Conferencing process.

Canada’s Budget 2019 responded to the access to capital priority with a $50 million investment over 5 years in the Métis Capital Corporations which was backed by the Canada-Métis Nation Economic Development Sub-Accord.

The Liberal Party’s recent election platform committed to advancing the priorities of the Métis Nation including:

- Establishing a new national benefits-sharing framework to ensure that Métis Nation communities directly benefit from major resource projects.

- Moving forward with a new target to have at least five percent of federal contracts awarded to businesses led by Indigenous Peoples.

The government’s Throne Speech on December 5, 2019, provided further impetus to action on these Métis Nation economic development priorities.

The March 4-5th Conference is expected to build on this momentum and address new emerging challenges and opportunities in the rapidly changing economy. Under the theme Building Wealth for the Métis Nation, the planning session chaired by MNBC President Clara Morin Dal Col looked at how to make the conference a success in advancing the economic interests of the Métis people in four sub-theme areas:

- Addressing critical infrastructure needs in Métis Nation communities by 2030, and providing new investments to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of this infrastructure.

Continued on next page
- building equity in businesses, major projects, and homeownership;

- building markets through procurement programs, major projects and trade and tourism;

- building human capital through accelerated and innovative education and training programs and services of the Métis Nation; and

- building the clean growth economy.

An important component of Canada’s climate change and clean growth strategy is Bill C-69 including an Impact Assessment Act which seeks to promote reconciliation and partnership with Indigenous peoples as an integral part of assessing the impact of economic and resource development projects, a critical piece of the project approval process. Two Métis Nation members of the new Indigenous Advisory Committee established by the Act, Elmer Ghostkeeper from Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement (Co-chair of the Committee) and lawyer Kyle Vermette, were on hand to brief the planning session on these developments.

This conference will play a significant role in the Métis Nation’s engagement with Canada, the Provinces and industry to collaborate on enhancing economic prospects for Métis people and boosting the Canadian economy.

MHRDA Working Group Meeting on December 4, 2019, topics including the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) implementation and future pathways, etc.
On December 11, 2019, Manitoba Metis Federation President and MNC National Spokesperson David Chartrand joined federal Minister of Middle Class Prosperity Mona Fortier at the unveiling of programming for the 42nd Winterlude, which will take place in Ottawa–Gatineau from January 31 to February 17, 2020.

Winterlude is a major winter celebration in the national capital featuring many winter activities and festivities over three weekends including tubing, skating, ice carving and cultural activities. The upcoming Winterlude from January 31 to February 17, 2020 will highlight the decisive role the Métis Nation under the Provisional Government of Louis Riel played in Manitoba’s entry into Confederation, which marks its 150th anniversary in 2020.

Manitoba Metis Federation President David Chartrand, who is also National Spokesperson for the MNC, spoke at the unveiling of the Winterlude program at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. The exposition of Métis culture promises to be an exciting part of the capital’s winter wonderland.
UN celebrates the conclusion of 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

Métis Nation President Clément Chartier and Minister of Culture and Languages Clara Morin Dal Col attended the High-level closing event of the International Year of the Indigenous Languages at the United Nations Headquarter in New York on December 17. The year 2019 has been declared by the United Nations as International Year of Indigenous Languages. The event was organized by the President of the UN General Assembly and co-organized by UNESCO and UNDESA.

Hon. Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, highlighted the importance of the legal measures implemented to promote and support Indigenous languages in the country.

“The international Year of Indigenous Languages is closing but the work is not complete”, stated President Chartier, “I lift up Canada for its commitment to work on this important issue.”

During this one-day event, deliberations were held to take stock of the current situation of Indigenous languages worldwide, analyze existing challenges and to promote them. During the event, Minister Morin Dal Col addressed the United Nations.
### UPCOMING EVENTS

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<td>Winterlude &amp; Manitoba 150th</td>
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<td>Nature Based Climate Summit</td>
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<td>Métis Nation Veteran’s Legacy Fund Roundtable</td>
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<td>Building Wealth for the Métis Nation Conference</td>
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