



Métis Nationalist Voice

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Métis Nation Issues and Interests

Métis Nation delegation meets with St. Jean Baptiste Society

by Clem Chartier

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On October 27, 2021 President David Chartrand of the Manitoba Métis Federation and the National Government of the Red River Métis met with SJBS President Marie-Anne Alepin, who was accompanied to the meeting by Yvon Bombardier, a Board Member.

A number of areas of potential cooperation were discussed, with a large emphasis on supporting each other in connection to language and culture retention. The

meeting was beneficial to both parties and a number of joint initiatives will be explored.

One of the areas discussed was the fact that thousands (some estimate between 20,000 to 50,000) Quebecois patriots in November 1885 came out and demonstrated against the death sentence imposed on President Louis Riel. This prompted then Prime Minister Macdonald to retort that: "He shall hang though every dog in Quebec

bark in his favour".

It was agreed that the two parties will explore the potential for erecting a monument and/or statue at Champs de Mer where the demonstration took place to honour both President Riel and the thousands of Quebecois supporters who joined the demonstration.

President's Message

"We must seek to preserve the existence of our own people. We must not by our own act allow ourselves to be swamped. If the day comes when that is done, it must be by no act of ours."

"Pray that God may preserve the little Métis Nation and cause it to grow . . . and remain faithful to its mission. During the five years that I must pass in exile, I have only this to say to the Métis: Remain Métis, become more Métis than ever."

– Louis Riel

From the days of Cuthbert Grant and Louis Riel to today, the Red River Métis have fought vigorously to preserve and protect our identity and independence, earning the name Otipemisiwak – the people who own themselves. It's who we are and what we stand for. We have always known we can accomplish anything, as long as we remain united.

When Louis Riel and John Bruce informed MacDougall that he could not enter the Northwest – our Homeland – without permission in October of 1869, they made the declaration as the national government of the Red River Métis.

Today, the Manitoba Métis Federation is the democratic government and national voice of the Red River Métis, also known as the Manitoba Métis, which is the origin, root, and core of the Métis Nation. Our ancestors negotiated Canada's entry into the Northwest, and Manitoba's entry into Confederation. We remain committed to advancing our work to meet the needs of your family and your community, while we advance our Nation.

Last week, we paused to honour our veterans, peacekeepers and champions of democracy and reflect on their accomplishments and sacrifices. We have rapidly moved from having the deeds and valour of our veterans completely unrecognized and our soldiers uncounted, to this time and place where people are becoming increasingly aware of their contributions.

However, there is a sharp contrast between this increased recognition for our veterans and the continued disregard for our distinct heritage and history by those falsely claiming it as their own.

Identity theft in two cases

The most recent high-profile case of identity theft at the University

of Saskatchewan has provoked outrage in the public eye. It's good to see that Canadians are starting to understand the challenges faced by the Indigenous community, particularly when people claim our identity without any basis in fact.

However, this case also highlights the fact that many Canadians still do not understand that the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) left the Métis National Council because of the risk of large-scale identity theft.

Let's be clear – there is very little difference between what has happened in Saskatchewan and what the Métis National Council is trying to do to our heritage and history.

We are the originators of the Red River Cart, the Red River Jig, the flower beadwork produced by our mothers and grandmothers and the music of our nation. We have a very clearly outlined and documented history that includes our interactions with the Catholic Church, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Canadian government, as well as the creation of the first treaty of the Northwest with the *Manitoba Act*, predating the numbered treaties with the First Nations.

Has anyone ever heard of a Simcoe Jig? Or a Matawa Cart? Of course not, because they don't exist.

And yet interest groups in these cities and other places in Ontario are calling themselves Métis, wearing our sashes and combining our cultural artifacts with other artifacts from the First Nations in Ontario. They are doing this with the support of the Métis Nation of Ontario and the remaining members of the Métis National Council.

Even our flag, the oldest flag in Canada, is being used by those who don't belong to us. First unfurled at the Victory of Frog Plain/Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816, the flag announced the presence of *la nouvelle nation*. We had become a nation, with a political consciousness and a sharp awareness of our rights – rights we were prepared to defend against any and all who challenged us.

President's Message

A monument to the Battle of Seven Oaks – called the Seven Oaks Massacre at the time, to ensure the Red River Métis were portrayed as the villains – still stands today on Main Street in downtown Winnipeg.

Now, people in Ontario want to connect themselves to us by proclaiming their mixed ancestry and wrapping themselves and their communities in our flag. This is particularly disturbing coming from a part of Canada that actively fought against our political consciousness and our collective will.

This is identity theft. The fact that it is being done by groups of people does not change the fact that it is identity theft. In both the individual and group cases, they are distorting our identity for their own gain and repurposing our history as their own. They are wearing our sashes and symbols and acting like they have a right to speak on our behalf.

But Canadians need to understand that Métis is not a shorthand for someone with an Indigenous ancestor. The Métis – the Red River Métis – have a distinct culture and history. To use our name as a generic term that applies to anyone in any region with Indigenous heritage violates that culture and identity.

Whether or not these individuals or communities have Indigenous ancestry, or if that ancestry makes them part of the nations their ancestors originated from, is not for us, as the Red River Métis, to decide. But it is up to us to be very clear that these groups and individuals are not us, and do not have a right to take our name.

We are finally regaining what was taken from our ancestors, and we cannot allow others to once again steal the opportunities that rightfully belong to our Citizens.

While we continue to do what we must to draw clear lines with the pan-Indigenous body calling itself the Métis National Council, we will also put greater rigour around ensuring that the only individuals who can claim to be Red River Métis are legitimately part of our nation.

The single source of truth for our identity

The fact is, the MMF is the modern-day successor of the

1869 *National Committee of the Red River Métis*, led by President John Bruce and President Louis Riel's 1869-70 *Provisional Government*. In July 2021, we affirmed our role when the MMF and Canada signed the *Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement*.

That agreement means your Métis government is recognized and understood to be the exclusive voice and representative of the Red River Métis across provincial and international boundaries. We are the government and representation of our nation, no matter where our Citizens, and those eligible to be Citizens, live. We are also the only body that can affirm the identity of our own Citizens.

Only through the MMF's objective, transparent, and verifiable process, using the individual's self-identification, genealogy, and supporting evidence, and our acceptance of this information, can a person be confirmed as Red River Métis and a part of our nation. No one else can make this representation or claim.

We will be communicating with all levels of government and post-secondary academic institutions to make it clear they can't affirm any claims to our identity by themselves. We will collaborate and cooperate with these organizations to ensure that when they employ someone who says they are Red River Métis, we are all confident that the individual is part of our nation.

It is only through this work that we will be able to continue growing recognition for the heroism of our veterans and celebrating the deeds and accomplishments of our Citizens, without having to contend with individuals and groups who want to grow their own recognition at our expense.

I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

Meeqwetch - President David Chartrand



Clem Chartier Appointed Métis Nation Ambassador

On Friday, November 5, 2021 Clément (Clem) Chartier was appointed Ambassador of the National Government of the Red River Métis by MMF President David Chartrand. As Ambassador, Mr. Chartier will be responsible for international and inter-nation affairs. One of his first formal functions was participating in the annual November 16th Red River Commemoration of the sacrifice by President Louis Riel in the defence of his Nation: the Métis Nation.

Clément Chartier, born in 1946 at Ile-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan, is a Métis lawyer, activist and politician. Raised in Buffalo Narrows, Chartier received his law degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 1978 and was called to the Saskatchewan Bar in 1980. In the late 1960s, after leaving a position with the provincial Department of Social Services, Chartier became a political activist after realizing that government was not serious about addressing the adverse social conditions faced by the Métis. During his political career, Chartier has held a number of executive positions in Métis and Indigenous political bodies, including: Native Youth Association of Canada

(executive director in the 1970s); Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS) (vice-president, 1982–85); Métis National Council (MNC) (chairperson, 1983 and 1985; ambassador, 1993–96; president, 2003); World Council of Indigenous Peoples (president, 1984–87; vice-president, 1993–97); Metis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN-S) (president, 1998–2003). A strong advocate for Métis rights, Chartier worked with other Métis activists to dissolve the AMNSIS in 1988 and create a Métis-only political body, the reformulated Métis Society of Saskatchewan. He was the plaintiffs' lawyer in *R. v. Grumbo* (1996), which briefly granted Métis Aboriginal Hunting Rights in Saskatchewan, and in *R. v. Morin and Daigneault* (1996), which provided Métis living in Saskatchewan with “Indian” fishing rights. He also served as MNC counsel for the 2003 Supreme Court of Canada decision *R. v. Powley*, which granted Métis in Ontario Aboriginal hunting rights. From: [The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan | De-tails \(uregina.ca\)](https://www.saskinfo.ca/De-tails/uregina.ca/)



Métis Christmas and New Year's Celebrations

Taken directly from: [*Heritage Days | Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*](#)

The Métis have long placed a great emphasis on maintaining strong relationships among families, extended families and communities, particularly when work was hard and the future uncertain. Nowhere were these bonds of kinship and friendship better renewed than during Christmas (Li Krissmiss/Li Zhoor di Nowel) and New Year's (Li Zhoor di Laan) celebrations. While Christmas Day was largely a religious event for most Métis communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it was also a festive occasion. For instance, in the 1880s and 1890s at Batoche, from Christmas to Epiphany/All Kings' Day (Li Zhoor dii Roi) (Jan. 6), Métis families held ballroom dances by "oil light" (bals à l'huile). A Prince Albert newspaper reported in 1889, "at Batoche, during the holidays, balls are the order of the day. Two were held last night, one at Pilon's and the other at D(aniel) Charette's and youngsters had all the chances they wanted of shaking themselves up."

Métis Elders have recounted that families spent Christmas Eve attending midnight mass, occasionally singing hymns in Cree, French or Michif. However, the biggest celebration during the holiday season was reserved for New Year's Day. As one Batoche Elder told historian Diane Payment, "On Christmas Eve, we went to midnight mass, and when we got home, we ate a little, drank some tea and went to bed. The presents were for New Year's Day."

Early on the morning of Christmas Day, families travelled by horse and sleigh to loved ones' homes and stayed until late in the evening. Prior to this gathering, mothers and daughters prepared food for days to ensure everyone would be well fed. Christmas and New Year's fare included fried doughnut-like bannock (lii bayng), meatballs (lii boolet), stew (rababou), chokecherries or saskatoon berries served with cream and sugar, puddings, pemmican and wild game, as well as tea and homemade beer or wine. Unlike the commercialism that permeates our holiday season today, traditional Métis Christmas celebrations were modest. One Elder recounts, "We did not have Christmas gifts, only candies, apples, and pastry."

While Christmas was a religious event for the Métis, New Year's was a grand social celebration. It was not uncommon for several households in a community to hold a feast and dance on different nights so that people could visit and celebrate for many evenings in succession around New Year's Day. In the 1860s at Prairie-Ronde, in what is now the area around Dundurn, Sask., a New Year's celebration lasted 10 days! Manitoba Métis Elder Joe Venne had this to say about the Métis' festive spirit during the holiday season: "When it came to the holidays, Christmas and New Year's, we used to go for two, three weeks at a time, dancing every night, partying every night. Other people didn't have that style." Depending on the community, some households would take turns holding a feast and dancing, allowing people to visit a different house each night.

Children were an integral part of New Year's celebrations. On New Year's Eve, children received presents from their parents, usually small gifts of food. One Elder related that "on New Year's Eve, children hung stockings at the foot of their bed and would wake up to find all sorts of treats." After receiving their presents on the morning of New Year's Day, children thanked and blessed their parents, and families hugged and kissed one another. Fathers also blessed their children on this day.

New Year's Day was usually held at the grandparents' home and was a special time for families, as cousins, aunts and uncles attended. It was an occasion for social drinking, and the eating of all sorts of food, with people travelling from house to house, dining, dancing and visiting. While visiting house-to-house, everybody would shake hands and kiss. As a result, some Métis called New Year's Day "Ochetookeskaw" (kissing day) or "Shakishchenoisi" (shaking hands day).

A Few Firsts For The Métis Nation

For more detail and more firsts: [Métis Firsts in North America](#) / [Manitoba Métis Federation \(mmf.mb.ca\)](#)

1801: On November 15, 1801, Alexander Henry records the Métis invention of the Red River Cart in his diary.

1800-1810: The York boat, based on an Orkney Islands-Viking influenced design, was invented in the early 1800s, by the Métis working for William Sinclair, a Métis Chief Factor from York Factory.

1818: Métis physician and surgeon John Bunn (1802-1861) was the first native-born doctor to practice medicine in the Red River Settlement.

1819: Pierre St. Germaine (1790-1870), a Métis voyageur of mixed Dene and French-Canadian ancestry, served for nine years with the North West Company, two and one-half years (1819-1822) with the first Franklin Arctic Exploration Expedition and then twelve years with the Hudson's Bay Company. He then retired to the Red River Settlement in 1834.

1837: Joseph Renville or Ranville (1779-1846), the son of a Dakota woman and a French Canadian fur trader, translated the entire Bible into the Dakota language in 1837. He was born in 1779 at what is now St. Paul, Minnesota.

1845: Marguerite Connolly (1830-1904) was the first Métis woman to enter the Order of the Grey Nuns (1845).

1850: Henry Budd (Sakacewescam) was the first Métis and Aboriginal North American to be ordained a deacon and then a priest by the Church of England.

1855: Alexander Kennedy Isbister (1822-1883) was the first Métis to publish in a scientific journal. Isbister was born at Cumberland House in 1822. studies.

1855: The Council of Assiniboia appointed William Ross the first Post Master for Red River in 1855.

1862: James Isbister (1833-1915) founded Prince Albert, Saskatchewan in 1862. .

1862: Treaty of the Métis and Dakota.

1863: The Ten Cent Treaty. for the Pembina and Turtle Mountain Métis.

1865: In 1865, John B. Renville or Ranville (d. 1903) became the first Métis and Aboriginal North American to be ordained a minister by the Presbyterian Church. **1866:** William Lucas Hardisty (1822-1881) is the first Métis known to have done research for the Smithsonian Institute.

1870s: In the early 1870s William Ross Jr. donated the land used for Winnipeg's first city hall.

1872: Gilbert Godon, a Métis from the Red Lake district of the Minnesota Territory, has gone down in history as Manitoba's first official outlaw when he killed Benjamin Marchand during a drinking brawl in 1872.

1875: This year marks the first and only numbered treaty (adhesion) between Canada and the Métis, Treaty Three.

1875: The spring of 1875 marks the first mass deportation of Métis out of the United States.

1878: John Norquay was elected by acclamation to Manitoba's first legislature in 1870. One year before his death, John Norquay made the first ascent of the peak that carries his name. Mount Norquay is a 2522 metre Mountain located in the Canadian Rockies near the town of Banff, Alberta.

1888: Richard Charles Hardisty, (1832-1889) was Canada's first Métis Senator. **1890:** Edward Cunningham (1862 -1920) became the first Canadian Métis from Alberta to be ordained as a Roman Catholic Priest. **1891:** The first Métis Q.C. was James McKay, the son of William McKay II a Chief Factor at Fort Ellice.

1894: James Francis Sanderson, (1848-1902) became the founder and the first president of the Alberta Agricultural Society in 1894. League in 1894.

1988: Clement Chartier became the first Métis person to become President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples.

Editorial

The recent MNS Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA) once again re-affirmed that MNS President Glen McCallum still does not get it. Having turned the MNS from a government with an inherent right-based self-government Constitution adopted in December 1993 by 900 delegates, to a Membership-based organization in February 2021 he and his cronies are still trying to dismantle the MNS Constitution by piece meal attempts.

One must ask why does not the current MNS leadership, in particular Mr. McCallum, not pursue his dismantling of the inherent right-based self-government Constitution through his conditional/contingent right (non-right) approach set out in the June 2019 so-called self-government agreement by which he sold out the Métis people's inherent right of self-government?

From what we hear, the delegates to the MNLA are beginning to pay greater attention to what Mr. McCallum and his advisers and lawyers are doing, particularly with their attempts to dismantle the Affiliates and do away with the Locals. This is very unwise, as it is the Locals which are the backbone of the MNS, and to which the Métis government must be responsible to.

Of course, this is consistent with what the current MNS is trying to do. Not only do they wish to do away with the Locals and will continue to try and achieve that, they have also taken legal action in the Court of Queen's Bench challenging the Provincial Government's 2010 Duty to Consult Policy. The 2010 Policy clearly states that the duty to consult is owed to the community and will deal directly with the Local Presidents who are impacted. It does also state that the Local(s) can delegate the duty to consult to the Region or the Head Office (MNS). The MNS is asking the court to rule that the duty to consult is not owed to the Local(s), but to the Head Office (MNS) itself.

At the federal level, the MNS is also attacking the right of Locals to pursue s.35 Constitution Act, 1982 Aboriginal rights and title. In *Durocher v. Canada* a Statement of Claim was filed by the A la Baie Local of Ile a la Crosse in October 2019 against the federal government challenging the scrip system by which Métis people had their land stolen from them. The Plaintiffs (including a number of individuals as well as the Ile a la Crosse Local from northwest Saskatchewan) are asking the Federal Court of Canada to order the federal government to establish a negotiating table to resolve their unextinguished Aboriginal title to the land.

This would not have been necessary if Mr. McCallum had honoured the pre-2017 MNS election where Minister Bennett agreed to establish an exploratory discussion table to seek a resolution to the 1994 land claim action. While Mr. McCallum as a Regional Director and Co-Chair of the North West Saskatchewan Métis Council had written to Bennett requesting this, and while the PMC in February 2017 endorsed it, the same Mr. McCallum after getting elected to the presidency of the MNS in May 2017 turned around and stated that there would be not negotiation table for the settling of the land claim, which ultimately led to the filing of the new Statement of Claim in October 2019 as Local leaders and members were no longer willing to wait until such time that Mr. McCallum decided to support their rights.

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The MNS is seeking intervener status in the Durocher case in order to argue that the Locals have no right to take s.35 Aboriginal rights actions, and that only the MNS (Head Office) has that right. Again, another example of the Head Office (MNS) fighting against the Locals and denying their rights. In this case, the MNS is siding with the federal government in fighting against Métis land rights.

While the MNS has millions of federal government funded dollars to fight against the Locals and against Métis s.35 rights, the Locals do not have the money to fight against or defend themselves against their so-called Métis government. This is why the MNS unilaterally and silently changed the citizenship application form in July 2020 by which they are forcing the applicants to “voluntarily” assign their s.35 rights and duty to consult to the Head Office (MNS) if they wish to get a membership card.

With the change in policy where Métis will only get a service from the MNS based on having a membership card, including Covid support, and only have the right to vote in MNS election and hold office, many Métis are being forced to sign away their rights.

So much for accountable, transparent, open and democratic so-called Métis government!



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www.metisnationalists.ca