



Métis Nationalist Voice

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Métis Nation Issues and Interests

Manitoba Métis Federation and True Métis Self-Government

by Clem Chartier

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The Manitoba Metis Federation has been steadfast in protecting its inherent right of self-government recognized and affirmed in s.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. In June 2019 the MMF refused to sign the so-called self-government agreements so quickly agreed to by the Presidents of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Nation of Ontario.

The reason for the MMF decision is because it believes in its inherent right of self-government and was not prepared to give it up. On the other hand, the members of the Tri-Council (MNS, MNA and MNO) in their disparate attempt to call themselves self-governments, signed on to a document which gives up their inherent right of self-government, for one conditional on whether the federal government will recognize their new constitutions, and then if

Statement made it clear that the Parties were close to arriving at a consensus on most of the elements which would go into a "Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement".

That Agreement was entered into between the Manitoba Metis Federation and Canada (after being ratified by both MMF and Federal Cabinets) on July 6, 2021. This Agreement is the very first self-government agreement reached between Canada and a representative body of the Métis Nation. This Agreement is quite comprehensive and provides for a wide range of subject matters, including the recognition that:

MMF is already the democratic representative government of the Manitoba Métis;



so, pass federal legislation giving their constitutions force of law.

MMF instead held fast to their position that they already have self-government and a Constitution developed by their citizens over the years. The first stage in this MMF-Canada negotiation process was the signing of a "Negotiators' Statement of Understanding" signed virtually on March 27, 2021 during the MMF virtual Annual General Assembly. That

- That the Manitoba Métis was historically known as the Red River Métis, many of whom continue to reside in Manitoba as well as elsewhere inside and outside of Canada;

- The Manitoba Métis possess s.35 Constitutional rights, including the inherent right of self-government and the definition of "Manitoba Métis" is rights-based, not membership based; and

- That the Manitoba Métis Constitution, first adopted in 1967, as amended over the years, is the written constitution of the MMF.

And importantly, it clearly acknowledges that the Manitoba Métis' right to self-determination and its inherent right of self-government are not contingent (conditional) on Canada's recognition, agreement, the signing of this Agreement, or the enactment of the federal implementation legislation.

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Further, the MMF has included in the Agreement the 2002 MNC GA definition of Métis, thereby honouring the decision of the Métis Nation leadership at that sitting of the General Assembly.

Finally, the Agreement is clear that this is the first step toward concluding a constitutionally-protected Treaty (s.35) to be ratified by the Manitoba Métis and Parliament, acknowledging that the Treaty is already close to completion.

This is a significant victory for the Métis Nation which will form the bedrock or foundation for the continued existence of the Métis Nation, its identity, culture, citizenship and homeland in Western Canada.

The citizens of the Métis Nation can once again thank the Métis governments centered at the Red River, first the Riel government in 1870 and now the Chartrand government in 2021.

Editors' note: See the following transcript of President Clément (Clem) Chartier's speech as the signing ceremony.

Clem Chartier, July 6, 2021 - Winnipeg, MB

Thank you Will. Thank you Elder Linda St.Cyr-Seric for your beautiful prayer, very inspirational and a very great prayer for such a special day.

Welcome Ministers and my good friend Jim (Carr), it's great to see you. Fellow Métis, today marks a significant milestone in the development of the Métis Nation, the political developments of the Métis Nation. Last year was the 150th anniversary of the Métis Nation joining this great country we know as Canada. Unfortunately, we couldn't celebrate it the way that we had wished to but nevertheless, it was a very significant year for us. 151 years ago at this location President Louis Riel and his government welcomed the draft of the *Manitoba Act* which made possible our entry into Confederation as a proud people with what we thought was a great future and they gathered here by the hundreds outside in some 40 below degree weather. Cold didn't mean anything to them, their hearts were happy and warm with those developments. Unfortunately, we were greeted by a 2 ½ year reign of terror which saw many of our citizens from the Red River moving west, join-

ing existing Métis settlements or creating new ones.

At that time the population of the Métis Nation was centered here at the Red River, some say up to 90%. So, it is here, here, at the Red River what is now the province of Manitoba where the Métis Nation flourished. Where our people in vast majority lived. It is here that President Riel and his provisional government negotiated our future. Unfortunately, many of those promises were breached and over the years we suffered greatly. But today, ironically, or maybe not ironically, but thankfully, under the current President, President David Chartrand and you, his Cabinet and the Manitoba Métis community and the Métis leadership at all levels, from the local level, to the regional to the provincial have stood strong. Have stood for the Métis Nation and have protected the integrity, the citizenship and the homeland of the Métis Nation in the face of a lot of political suppression or attempted suppression by some to keep us down to in fact open us up to attacks from outside of the Métis Nation. To have people from outside the Métis Nation join our leadership and take us to where we don't want to go. We can never have non-Métis people involved in the government of the Métis Nation. Today as I leave the office of the Métis National Council in a number of weeks, as a founder of the Métis National Council in March of 1983 our *raison d'être* was to secure a land base and self-government. You and your government here in this province, the birthplace of the Métis Nation are well on your way to securing that. So, in March of 1983 we said never again will we allow any non-Métis people to speak on our behalf. Never again will we let anybody influence us in this respect whether it is the federal government, provincial government or non-Métis governments that call themselves Métis. Never again we said will we let that happen. And I am very, very honoured to be here today to witness your government, your President signing this significant self-government recognition agreement which is going to lead us and I say us meaning the Métis Nation as a whole in western Canada forward because from this day forward we can say the Métis National Council has got us here but it is now up to our government to lead us forward into the future, as a people, as a nation intact in our citizenship, intact in our homeland and again intact in where our future will be taking us for our future generations and I believe firmly that your government is going to be not only the catalyst but the protector of the Métis Nation and from this spot where Riel and the hundreds stood 151 years ago this is where we are going to rebuild from, from the inside outwards and forget about these distractions from Ontario and BC, we the historic Métis Nation, the descendants of the historic Métis Nation will succeed, we will survive and I look forward today to hearing this President, President Chartrand speaking where 151 years ago President Riel spoke. Thank you.

Manitoba Metis Federation and Alberta Métis Federation Sign Memorandum of Understanding

By Clem Chartier

On July 21, 2021 in Edmonton, Alberta MMF President David Chartrand and AMF Chairperson Dianne Scoville signed an MOU through which they pledge to work together in the spirit of nation-building as part of the historic Métis Nation, and as kin to establish a relationship for cooperation to protect the Métis Nation and to benefit all Métis Nation citizens.



They intend to do this by engaging in a cooperative and open dialogue to identify and address priorities and develop common approaches with respect to:

- Protecting the historic Métis Nation identity;
- Exercising Métis Nation rights under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* across the Métis Nation Homeland, including addressing trans-boundary challenges and opportunities;
- Strengthening the bonds of the nation-to-nation and government-to-government relationship between Canada and the Métis Nation;
- Partnering to pursue legal, cultural, economic, business and other mutually agreeable opportunities; and
- Honouring Métis Nation Veterans, Elders, families and children.

This is the first of many which the Manitoba Métis government wishes to enter into across the Métis Nation in order to protect the integrity, citizenship, identity, culture, future and geographic homeland of our people in Western Canada.

Transcript of speech by President Clément (Clem) Chartier, July 21, 2021 Signing Ceremony between the Manitoba Metis Federation Government and the Alberta Métis Federation, Edmonton, Alberta.

Thank you for the introduction. Thank you Joe (Blyan) for the opening prayer. Today is another significant step forward for the Métis Nation. I have been around for a while. Of course, my good friend Stan Delorme knows that. Others, and I say across the street (MNA office) know that too! (laughter). They would probably say “too long”! (more laughter). In any event here I am and more importantly, here you are. Here is the Métis Nation! Here

are the defenders of the Métis Nation! (applause) A lot of people confuse organizations with our people, with our nation. Our nation is not an organization. We are a distinct people, with a long and deep history in Western Canada. And that is being challenged. Our mere existence is being challenged. Challenged by current Presidents (MNA Audrey Poitras and MNS Glen McCallum) who don’t understand the difference between nationhood, peoplehood and organizations. They believe in their organizations. They believe that

their job is to make their organizations possibly be the best it can be to serve the people within their geographic borders, without giving thought to what they are doing to us as a people, to our history, to our past, to the many sacrifices made by many, including many of our great leaders such as Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont and others, men and women, children who suffered to see us where we are today.

They don’t consider all that. What they think is success is getting a big bank account and aiming for a bigger bank account: more programs, more services and they say that it is success, while leaving behind our people, our identity, our homeland.

Leaving behind our spirituality, who we are as a people. And that’s not right! And I was, ... I should mention John Weinstein an adviser to the Métis National Council is here, and John and I have seen, and Joe of course, have seen a lot of developments since the early 70s, certainly the mid-70s onwards. We have seen a lot of success. But we had a vision. We had a dream of what we wanted for our people. And we are getting more and more successful in terms of getting the programs on the service side and forgetting the rest of it. And now we have this great threat from the East. These hundreds of thousands of people that call themselves Métis simply because they have some Indian ancestry. They are not part of our history. They are not part of us. I often say that we have a language, we have a culture, we have music, we have dance, we have spirit, we have kinship connections throughout the prairies. I always say those know no (provincial) boundaries. No provincial boundary cuts our culture. It is spread right across the West, right across our homeland.

Unfortunately, because of the way Confederation came, in 1905 Saskatchewan and Alberta were created as provinces and because of the abdication by the federal government, abandoning us we were forced to rely on our resources. And we have done well on our own, for sure.

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Allan Métis Community Organizing for Local Citizens

By Lorna Ledoux

....Alberta/Manitoba Métis continued from page 3

We became kind of marginalized by (these) boundaries. But what I am happy to say today, I am very thankful to President Chartrand and his Cabinet and his community leaders who understand that no, the (provincial) boundaries don't mean anything, these provincial boundaries don't mean anything to the descendants of the historic Métis Nation centered at the Red River.

It doesn't matter where you are, you are part of the Nation, and this movement that has begun at the Red River under the Manitoba Metis Federation government. Just to underpin, it is a good movement, it is a great movement. And I always thank the Manitoba Metis Federation and its delegates when I have an opportunity, the honour to speak at their general assemblies, that they are the bedrock; they are the guardians of Métis nationalism. They are the ones that will continue to stand up and fight for our existence as a people, while others are trying to tear us down.

We need this. We need the Manitoba Metis Federation to lead this. We need to have a national presence that goes beyond (provincial) boundaries. Not wed together by organizations because we are passed that. And President Chartrand I am sure will explain to you why we are passed that and why the Manitoba Métis government is the right government to lead us into the future as one people, one nation, one homeland and that is us in Western Canada and we can never forget that! (applause)

And I congratulate the Alberta Métis Federation. I know there too I may have hung around a little too long for some, a good 14-15 years, interacting and I have seen the developments, the growth and not only the business growth, but also the political and spiritual growth.

It makes absolute sense that the first MOU to signed between the Manitoba Métis government, the government of the descendants of the Red River and those outside in the rest of the homeland is between the two of you, so congratulations to both. (applause)

Thank you.

A feeling of excitement reminiscent of the 1970s Métis organizing filled the air on the last Saturday of June 2021. A group of about 50 Métis citizens gathered at the Allan Saskatchewan Elks Hall on June 26, 2021 to decide on how to create an entity to serve the needs of local Métis. It was decided that the group would become the Allan 1885 Métis Community. By-Laws were adopted and Executive members elected to run the affairs of the group that was to be incorporated. MN-S Region 2A Director Kathie Pruden Nansel and Provincial Secretary Lisa McCallum were in attendance to explain the MN-S structure and give an overview of programs and services of the MN-S.

Many of the attendees are descendants of the once wealthy Fisher and Letendre clans of nineteenth century Batoche. After the 1885 Métis resistance, the family had made their way to the Lestock area and intermarried with the local families. At Lestock, the family had survived the prairie drought of the 1930s as did many Métis by working hard and planning well. Some of the family heads resided on the Lestock Métis farm before moving to Allan in the 1960s to work for the railroads.

Allan is a town of about 650 people that is located about 60 kilometers east of Saskatoon and 40 kilometers north of Lake Blackstrap. Residents commute to work in Saskatoon or work in local industries such as Potash or Agriculture.

Other Métis that came together to form the group include people from across the homeland who have settled in Allan and surrounding area. All Métis from the area are considered members of the Allan 1885 Métis Community. Attendees set the direction for the elected directors to promote Métis history and culture and to provide or refer citizens to programs and services as required. Since the meeting, President Jeremy Denomie has made contact with 20 plus additional members. He is optimistic that the group will provide some much needed services for Allan Métis.



Métis National Council President's June 2021 Messgag

Clem Chartier

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The tragedy of Indian residential schools continues to plague Canada, and in particular the federal government. The revelation of the 215 confirmed burial sites at the Kamloops Indian residential school adds yet another sorry chapter to this sad Canadian legacy. A lot of media and political attention has been generated and so it should. A lesser well-known fact of residential schools is the ones attended by Métis students. With their exclusion from the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement in 2006 and the subsequent apology by Prime Minister Harper in 2008 in the House of Commons, the former Métis students were not only marginalized but cast aside and forgotten. This included our exclusion from the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the subsequent Calls for Action. Rather, this lack of dealing with Métis residential/boarding schools was a resounding Call for In-action. I am one of many thousands who attended such institutions, the one at Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan one of the first to be opened in western Canada in 1860. Prior to 1906 both First Nations and Métis children

attended that institution and, after being destroyed by fire in 1906, it was replaced for Métis students and a new one built at Beauval a few miles away by river for the newly established Treaty 10 Indian students. The parents of the Métis children in 1906 had applied for land scrip rather than Treaty which began over a century of exclusion from programs and services from the federal government. The former students of the Ile a la Crosse residential school have been meeting since February 2007 and are no closer today in getting a settlement than we were in 2006. The reason for this position was the Ile a la Crosse residential school was a Roman Catholic Church run institution and not federally funded like its sister Indian residential school at Beauval which was run by the same people. The treatment and abuse at both residential schools was the same, the only difference is the lingering question of who paid for the operation of the Ile a la Crosse residential school which enabled the physical, sexual and psychological abuse to take place. In my response to Prime Minister Harper's apology in 2008 on behalf of Canada, I responded that "it was the children that paid the price"! The federal government has a fiduciary duty to deal with all Indigenous peoples equally and there cannot only be justice for some Indigenous people and not others. The Honour of the Crown is at stake and the federal government must deal with all Indigenous residential schools, including the one at Ile a la Crosse, and accept its responsibility as it was under its watch that these residential schools were not only permitted to operate but were encouraged and empowered to do so.



Historical Red River Métis Summers Were Spent Hunting Buffalo



Métis dominated in the Pemmican trade in the late 1700s and the 1800s: beginning with their organization of the buffalo hunt and institution of Laws of the Prairies. Métis people were familiar with the ways of the New World and able to capitalize on the needs of the people and the nation that was created through the fur trade.

Historical Métis Buffalo Hunts were an important activity for Red Rive families. There were usually organized hunts each year, in the Spring and Autumn which were carried out through almost militaristic precision. The combined force of a Métis hunt was larger than any other force of its time.

Hundreds of men, women, children, Red River carts and horses were organized for the journeys extending hundreds of miles to where the buffalo were. Tons of processed buffalo meat and hides had to be transported back after successful hunts. These hunts provided impressive organizational structure that was by 1820 a way of life for everyone on or near the Red River and other Métis communities. Buffalo hunting expanded across the Prairies in the 1840s.

After the first day of travel the first organizational meeting for the hunt would be held and a President would be selected and a number of captains were nominated by the President and the people. The captains then appointed up to ten of their own policemen whose duty it was to see that the Laws of the Hunt were strictly carried out. Guides ensured that the camp flag remained raised until it was time to settle for the night. At the end of the day the captains had the carts placed in the form of a circle with the horses and cattle inside the ring. The captains and their policemen made sure that this was properly done. The Métis buffalo hunters camped in unadorned tipis. Camping or-

ders were given by a flag signal.

Once the buffalo were spotted, the hunters were drawn up in line, with the President, captains, and police a few yards in front. When the President gave the signal, the hunt began.

Priests sometimes accompanied the hunt to celebrate mass and perform marriages. The hunt was a food-gathering activity, a commercial endeavor, and a social occasion that brought together families who saw each other only a few times a year. In the Spring and Autumn, as many as 1,600 people would gather at Pembina, on the Red River, to elect a provisional government. In terms of justice, scouting parties maintained order within the community, enforcing compliance with the Laws of the Hunt and providing protection from attacks by rival groups.

Métis hunting technique differed from that of their Indian ancestors in that instead of driving Buffalo off cliffs or into pounds and enclosures, they used horses and firearms. They started a stampede, and then the hunters ran their horses into the herd and selected the animals they wanted to kill, firing point-blank at full gallop, often taking down ten to twelve Buffalo in two hours.

Buffalo meat from the hunts fed Métis families, white colonists and fur traders. At the Red River, the Métis participated in other activities, including: trapping, hunting, transporting goods for the fur companies, gardening, farming, fishing, harvesting wild rice, building carts, making clothing, collecting lime, limestone, and maple sugar.

Métis who participated in the northern hunts preferred to stay out on the Prairie in winter camps were known as hiverants. Roughly thirty such settlements across Alberta,

By Lorna Ledoux

Saskatchewan and Montana consisted of about forty or fifty rough hewn, flat sod roofed cabins. These villages became more settled year round after the 1870 Resistance and the dispersal of the Métis there.

All parts of the Buffalo were used and many parts had multiple uses:

Rawhide

Containers, Shields, Buckets, Moccasin Soles, Drums, Splints, Mortars, Cinches, Ropes, Sheaths, Saddles, Blankets, Stirrups, Bull Boats, Masks, Parfleche, Ornaments, Lariats, Straps, Caps, Quirts, Snowshoes, Shroud

Buckskin

Cradles, Moccasin, Tops, Winter Robes, Bedding, Shirts, Belts, Leggings, Dresses, Bags, Quivers, Tipi Covers and Liners, Bridles, Backrests, Tapestries, Sweatlodge

Hair

Headdresses, Pad Fillers, Pillows, Ropes, Ornaments, Hair Pieces, Halters, Bracelets, Medicine, Balls, Moccasin Lining, Doll Stuffing, Amulets, Bridle Decorations

Bones

Fleshing Tools, Pipes, Knives, Arrowheads, Shovels, Splints, Sleds, Saddle, Trees, War Clubs, Scrapers, Quirts, Awls, Paintbrushes, Game Dice, Tableware

Horns

Arrow Points, Cups, Fire Carriers, Powderhorns, Spoons, Ladles, Headdresses, Toys

Paunch and Stomach Linings

Meat, Wrappings, Buckets, Cups, Basins, Canteen, Bowls, Containers

Tail

Medicine, Switch, Fly brush, Decorations, Whips, Toys, Jewellery

Fat

Tallow, Soap, Hair Grease, Cosmetics, Cooking, Medicines

Skull

Masks, Medicine,

Prayers, Rituals, Sun Dance, Decoration

Muscles

Glue, Thread, Arrow, ties, Cinches, Bow strings

Hooves, Feet, Dewclaws

Glue, Rattles, Decorations, Rituals, Spoons

Beard

Ornamentation, Toys, Doll, Decoration, Rituals, Masks

Food

Pemmican, Sausages, Jerky, Blood pudding, Soup

Bladder

Pouches, Bags, Medicine

Chips

Fuel, Diaper Powder

Teeth

Ornamentation

Tongue

Choice Food

Brain and Liver

Hide Preparation, Tanning

Scrotum

Rattles, Containers

Tendons

Sewing, Bow Strings

Paints

Blood, (Red/brown), Gall, (Yellow), Stomach Contents

Hind Leg Skin

Pre-shaped moccasin



Métis Nationalist Voice Editorial

As the MN-S settles into life as usual following the spring election, one would hope that reconciliation is in the air for the members of the Provincial Métis Council. There really is no time for infighting and exclusionary tactics at this point. Yet the recent portfolio assignments speak volumes.

Elected Treasurer Robert Lafontaine and Secretary Lisa McCallum are conspicuously absent from the list. Why is this? Robert was elected to be the Treasurer and oversee the finances of the MN-S, so it is a bit strange to see that he does not have the finance portfolio. Lisa was elected to be the Secretary and work to develop capacity for the locals. Hopefully the PMC will move beyond whatever is behind their exclusion? It is disheartening and people were hopeful that it would stop with the recent election.

There were rumors of the Treasurer and Secretary positions being removed from the MN-S structure during the last election campaign. However rumors are often untrue and there has not been a Constitutional amendment to facilitate that fundamental change.

The bigger picture Métis political

scene is no less disheartening with the struggle between Mr. Clem Chartier and Presidents Poitras and McCallum. The latter two still appear to be supporting persons being included in entities that are funded specifically for Métis who fit the 2002 MNC definition. While they may be respecting the autonomy of the MNC Affiliates to determine their own citizenship, there would have to be a broader, (almost watered down) Métis definition, to facilitate such inclusion of persons who are currently non-Métis. This is not to say that there are not other groups of Métis in existence. They are simply not part of the current defined group who are descendants of the historical Métis Nation in Western Canada.

On a happier note, life seems to be returning to normal post-pandemic in parts of the nation. Back to Batoche has gone virtual again this year, but one hopes that next year will be held at the festival grounds.

Métis have much to be proud of with our rich culture and history. The growing pains we are plagued with seem chronic and endemic, but we are a relatively new nation compared to others across the world that are thousands of years old as op-

posed to hundreds.

So many of our ancestors and elders worked to organize the MN-S and other provincial affiliates. They would be proud of the accomplishments of their descendants in terms of educational levels, economic independence and contributions to the Métis community. This needs to be remembered and our focus needs to be on carrying the nation further. Métis youth certainly have their work cut out for them. Many youth have chosen not to be involved in the MN-S due to public infighting and the embarrassment it causes to our people.

Pride in our Métis identity has to be at the forefront of any and all developments or we will lose any chance we had of engaging our youth. Timing is good right now, because many got their Métis cards to access funding to attend post-secondary institutions. Métis leaders across the homeland need to give these youth a reason to stay with the nation and not abandon their culture and identity because the current leaders are engaged in quarrels that take away from the reason early Métis organized.



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**To contribute to this publication:
Editor - Métis Nationalist Voice
MetisNationalists@gmail.com**

We are on the web at:

www.MetisNationalists.ca