



# Métis Nation



May 2017

## Prime Minister and Métis Nation leaders Sign Accord at Summit in Ottawa

On April 13, 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau, Métis Nation President Chartier, and the Presidents of the MNC Governing Members signed the Canada-Métis Nation Accord during the first Métis Nation-Crown Summit in Ottawa.

The Accord marks a significant step towards a renewed government-to-government relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. It outlines the ways in which the Government of Canada and the Métis National Council and its Governing Members will work together to set priorities and



develop policy in areas of shared interest. Under the Accord, priorities for the first year will be employment and training,

education, early learning and child care, housing, health and new fiscal relations.

Joining the Prime Minister at the Summit were Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Health Jane Philpot, President of the Treasury Board Scott Brison, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Patricia Hajdu, and Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos.

President Chartier provided a historical background to the section 35 rights issues which are the subject of regional exploratory tables involving the MNC

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Governing Members and the federal government. Métis Nation Finance Minister David Chartrand and President Melanie Omeniho of Women of the Métis Nation critiqued the recent federal budget and its impact on the Métis Nation. The Presidents of the Governing Members focused on the priority issues in their respective provinces.

The federal Ministers at the table reported on policy initiatives that would be utilized in addressing Métis Nation concerns. These included Métis Nation-specific components of the skills development (ASETS) program which is undergoing renewal, the national housing strategy and the national Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

The permanent bilateral process established in the Canada-Métis Nation Accord includes annual meetings of Métis Nation leaders with the Prime Minister, semi-annual meetings with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and key Cabinet Ministers, and quarterly meetings with various Assistant Deputy Ministers and other senior officials on priority issues.


In a joint news release with President Chartier, Prime Minister Trudeau stated:

“Last December, I made the promise that federal ministers and Métis Nation leaders would work together to solve important challenges. We did not take that commitment lightly. Today, we are proud to

announce our joint signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord. While there is still much that needs to be done if we are to address the unique social, cultural, economic, and environmental issues faced by the Métis, we now have a solid foundation upon which to move forward with a respectful, renewed Métis Nation-Crown relationship, for the benefit of all Canadians.”

President Chartier stated: “We are greatly encouraged by entering into a government-to-government, nation-to-nation process of engagement with the government of Canada under Prime Minister Trudeau. It offers the opportunity to advance the interests and rights of the citizens of the Métis Nation.”





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## Message from the President

After years of persistent lobbying and advocacy, the push for a distinctions-based approach to the Métis Nation by governments, federal and provincial, is beginning to pay off, at least with the federal government.

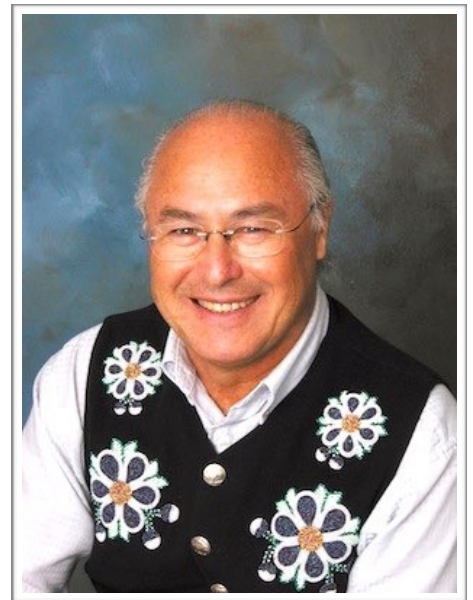
Since the election of the Liberal Party to government in Ottawa, the past year and a half has seen a radical shift in federal government-Indigenous peoples' relationships. Beginning with the March 2016 First Ministers Meeting (FMM) on Climate Change and the invitations to the national representatives of Indigenous governments (Métis National Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Assembly of First Nations) to their respective Summits with the Prime Minister in 2017, the Métis Nation is finally where it needs to be.

There can be no turning back by either the federal government, nor the leadership of the Métis Nation itself. That does not mean that there are no issues left with the Métis Nation leadership itself. In

Saskatchewan we have now witnessed the departure of a pan-Métis advocate, leaving the space for pro-Métis Nation advocates to begin the long rebuilding process in that part of the Métis Nation homeland.

There is still some resistance in other jurisdictions to further consolidation of the Métis Nation. At the recent General Assembly of the Métis Nation there was an apparent uneasiness by some to move to a central repository of Métis Nation citizens, a "National Registry" which would simply be an extension of the Governing Member registries, not a replacement of them.

We profess to believe in the Métis Nation. We all use the same criteria for registration. We all believe in self-government and the inherent rights of our citizens. Surely one of those rights is the right to be registered if one meets the criteria for registration. Once registered, all Métis Nation citizens have the right to not be stripped of their birthright. It is




not a membership in an organization or a private club!!

We must always be vigilant to protect our rights. We must always remember that we are where we are at today because we have fought on the basis of being a distinct people, of being a nation. We must do everything in our power to defend this. Any movement forward, such as a national registry which makes us stronger and unified, must be cherished, encouraged and nourished.







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## Canada and Indigenous Leaders Celebrate 10th anniversary of UNDRIP at the UN




On April 25, Métis Nation President Chartier joined National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed and Minister of Indigenous Affairs Carolyn Bennett at the 16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York

to mark the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Minister Bennett addressed the Permanent Forum on April 24th and reaffirmed the commitment of the federal government to fully adopt and implement the Declaration. She said that

Canada will amend laws written in a paternalistic and colonial way and implement direction given to all Ministers in the Trudeau Cabinet. She also announced that Canada was retracting the government's previous concerns about two aspects of the Declaration that deal with "free, prior and informed consent".

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The Minister joined the three national Indigenous leaders at a side event jointly sponsored by the AFN, MNC and ITK at the United Nations. In his remarks, President Chartier stated: “The Métis Nation has always based its rights as a people and a nation with the right to self-determination under international law. Peoplehood and nationhood are the ultimate source of Métis rights.”

He said he was encouraged by the Trudeau government viewing section 35 as a “full box” of rights. He noted that the Métis Nation had entered into a number of rights resolution processes and hoped to conclude agreements that could be constitutionally protected. Any legislative framework for implementing UNDRIP should reflect the commitment of Canada to enter into those agreements with s.35 rights bearing peoples.



The Métis Nation supports the goal of the Working Group of Ministers headed by the Justice Minister that will review federal policies and laws to ensure they are consistent with Canada’s obligations under UNDRIP. “This is a logical and positive step in the application of UNDRIP in Canada”, said President Chartier.

He also voiced support for the proposed federal Indigenous Languages Act as something that could put the preservation and promotion of Indigenous languages including Michif on a similar legal footing to Canada’s official languages.







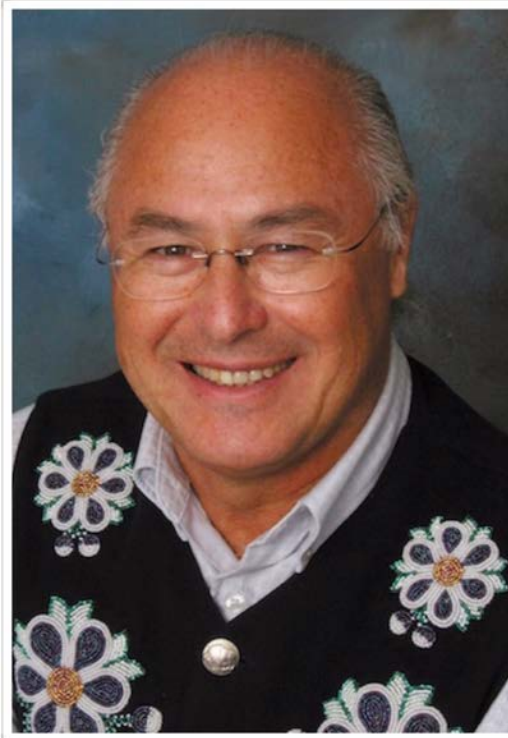
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# Clément Chartier re-elected to 5th Term as President of Métis National Council

Faced with a spirited challenge from Métis Nation of Alberta Regional Director Bev New, Chartier gets mandate to head Métis Nation into talks with Trudeau Government under recently signed Canada-Métis Nation Accord.

As the Métis Nation heads into an intensive process of negotiations with the Trudeau government on priorities under the recently signed Canada-Métis Nation Accord, President Chartier was re-elected at the Métis Nation General Assembly in Winnipeg on April 28, 2017.


In the State of the Nation address at the outset of the Assembly, Chartier provided



delegates with a thorough review of the work undertaken by the Métis National Council in advance of the recent Métis Nation-Crown Summit with the Prime Minister and his Ministers. He also set out the

ways in which the Métis Nation governments must mobilize their resources in order to engage effectively in the permanent bilateral process with the Prime Minister and his Ministers.





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# STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

*President Clément Chartier*

At last year's General Assembly in Winnipeg, our keynote speaker at the dinner banquet, Minister of Indigenous Affairs Dr. Carolyn Bennett, reaffirmed the developing nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship between Canada and the Métis Nation.

The roots of that relationship had first surfaced during the federal election campaign in 2015 when Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party unveiled a bold and unprecedented Métis Nation Policy.

A Nation-to-Nation relationship between Canada and the Métis Nation...

The words and the concept certainly marked a sharp and welcomed break from the past.

The question, which was then on many of our minds, was whether and how this nation-to-nation relationship would unfold and what the practical implications would be.

In other words, what's in it for our people?

How will it impact our lives?

How will it change things and will that be for the better?

Today, as we move toward the mid-term mark of the Trudeau government's first term in office, we are getting much closer to answers to what the Nation-to-Nation relationship means.

Let's take a look at the results to date.

Regarding settlement of our unique rights and claims which the Trudeau government had stated from the beginning was essential for establishing the new relationship and advancing reconciliation with the Métis Nation, there has definitely been progress.

The federal government has established a negotiation process between Canada and the Manitoba Metis Federation in order to settle the outstanding land claim of the Manitoba Métis community upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2013.


It has established, or is establishing, exploratory tables with the Governing Members to address Métis Section 35 rights including Métis self-government with a clear timeframe for the parties to reach an agreement to move into formal negotiations.

The Trudeau government has also applied the Nation-to-Nation relationship to its intergovernmental relations policy, making a sharp break with governments of the past.


In its work with the provinces and territories on climate change and a new health accord, it decided to involve the Indigenous peoples but restricted that involvement to the national representative bodies of the Métis Nation, the First Nations and the Inuit.

It was clearly signaling that Indigenous governments or representatives of those governments, not advocacy bodies like CAP and NWAC, should be engaged with the federal, provincial and territorial governments in addressing matters of critical national importance.

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Our involvement in the development of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and meeting with the First Ministers in Ottawa on December 9, 2016 is indicative of this approach.

In our joint statement on December 9, the Prime Minister and I agreed to move forward to ensure the Métis are full and effective partners in advancing clean growth and addressing climate change and this approach would be based on renewing Canada's nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship with the Métis Nation.

So far, so good.

The next question was how would the Nation-to-Nation relationship affect federal social, economic and cultural policies and programs affecting the Métis and, more to the point, the way in which the federal government and its administrative machinery relate to the Métis and address our needs in the federal budget?

Our experience with Budget 2016 had been mixed.

It had provided \$25 million for the development of a Métis Nation Economic Development Strategy which was a set aside for the Métis Nation.

During the past year our Governing Members have been able to work out the distribution of these funds in a manner consistent with their priorities and under their control and management.

This has strengthened their capital corporations, is leading to the creation of a new capital corporation in BC, and has also enabled our Governing Members to make broader-based, innovative investments in economic development.

While it was an unprecedented recognition of the Métis Nation in a federal budget, the \$25 million was a drop in the bucket of the record \$8.4 billion additional spend on Indigenous peoples in the 2016 budget, almost all of which was devoted to First Nations.

What was particularly troubling was the apparent belief of the Prime Minister and his Ministers, including his Finance Minister, that the Métis were participating in that larger spend.

They clearly had not been properly advised by officials. For Budget 2017, however, we could expect better things we were told.

On December 15, 2016, the Prime Minister met with the MNC, AFN and ITK to announce permanent bilateral mechanisms with First Nations, the Métis Nation and the Inuit.

He described the work with each Indigenous people as a Kelowna-like process, in which he would meet with us to develop policy on shared priorities, and monitor our progress going forward.

Similar meetings with key Cabinet Ministers would take place at least twice each year and between these meetings, senior officials from the Métis Nation and the federal government would be working on the priorities and developing policies that could meaningfully address them.


This bilateral process of engagement with the Métis Nation struck me as holding great potential for a number of reasons.

In the past, we had managed to negotiate strong agreements-in-principle with federal governments - the Métis Nation Accord with the Mulroney government and the Kelowna Accord with the Martin government - but the first depended on the approval of the Charlottetown Accord in a national referendum and the second depended on the survival of the Martin government which was about to go to the polls.

We all know what the outcome of each was.

This time, we had a Prime Minister, only a year into his term, launching and heading up a permanent ongoing process of

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intensive work on our priorities, with himself and the Métis Nation leadership at the top of the oversight and accountability chain of command.

Those regular meetings with the Prime Minister measuring progress on our priorities seemed an effective way to hold his Ministers' and their officials' feet to the fire.

A series of events would quickly put the Prime Minister's new process to the test.

In advance of the first Métis Nation - Crown Summit scheduled for January 30, 2017, our officials encountered resistance from federal officials to the wording of a draft accord that was expected to be signed at the Summit and would identify the priorities for the Métis Nation and how they could be implemented.

There appeared to be a disconnect between what the Prime Minister and his Ministers were saying and what their senior officials were doing.

The Summit had to be postponed due to the shooting at a Quebec City mosque but the Board of Governors did meet on January 30 with most of the Ministers who had been scheduled to participate in the Summit in what amounted to a test run.

At that time, Board members expressed their disappointment over the turn of events and federal and Métis Nation officials were instructed to renew their efforts to come up with a consensus document.

The federal Budget 2017, tabled on March 22 this year, took another turn for the worse.

It did include an investment of \$84.9 million over the next five years, and \$28.3 million per year ongoing after that, to build the governance capacity of the Métis National Council and the Governing Members and support the registries.

But in other areas of the \$3.4 billion Indigenous spend, the document went silent on the Métis Nation.

Again, federal Ministers expressed surprise at our disappointment because they had been led to believe that much of the funding for "off-reserve" programs was actually meant for the Métis Nation.

Métis set-asides could be expected in areas like housing and early learning and childcare, we were assured.

But when we asked - "Where in the budget does it say that?" - they had no answer.

Budget 2017 raised real concerns that, notwithstanding the good intentions of the Prime Minister and his Ministers, there was still a systemic failure to crack the deeply entrenched barriers we face as Métis people within the federal system to meaningful action and spending on our needs.

The extent of those barriers had been highlighted in the report of the Minister's own Special Representative on reconciliation with the Métis Nation, Tom Isaac, who addressed last year's Assembly shortly before the release of his report.


Based on interviews with federal civil servants, he reported on their attitudes that Métis rights were lesser or subservient to those of other Indigenous peoples or that treaty rights "trump" Métis rights, even though there was no law supporting these propositions.

He reported on their preference to avoid dealing with the Métis, stating bluntly that INAC's Regional Offices didn't even see Métis-related issues as a part of their day-to-day mandate.

When called upon to do something for Métis, Mr. Isaac reported the preference of these officials was to lump the Métis in with non-status Indians and offer programs under a general "Aboriginal" or "off-reserve" framework.

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Anyone reading his report and his observation that almost the entire amount of Canada's resources for Indigenous peoples is devoted exclusively to First Nations and Inuit would understand that the reason for this, to a large extent, is the prevailing attitude of the federal bureaucracy that this is what the Métis deserve.

In fact, the very first recommendation of the Isaac Report was for Canada to educate federal employees involved with Indigenous-related matters about the Métis Nation, our history, culture and rights.

Tom Isaac confirmed what we have known for a long time through long and bitter experience.

The attitudes of indifference if not outright hostility to the Métis are deeply engrained in the federal system from the lowest levels in the Department of Indigenous Affairs right up to the highest echelons of the federal civil service.

I, and the Board of Governors, were quite concerned over the language in the budget, the apparent backsliding into referencing the Métis as one of many groups that would be eligible for participation in off-reserve programs rather than set-asides for the Métis Nation under our control and management.

Budget 2017 seemed to be signaling that, despite the Trudeau government and despite the *Daniels* decision on federal responsibilities toward Métis, the invisible hand of the bureaucrats was still hard at work.

The same hand that had assured so many Ministers and governments before that Métis were eligible for anything not reserved for First Nations and Inuit.

Like the Urban Aboriginal Strategy or UAS which had allocated less than \$1 million of its \$53 million annual budget to Métis governments even though the Métis are the majority of the Indigenous population in the largest centres served by the UAS.

On March 27, 2017, I wrote to the Prime Minister to express the disappointment of the Métis Nation over a budget that, while providing some additional funding for the governance capacity of the MNC and Governing Members, had neglected the needs of the people they serve by failing to ensure distinctions-based set-asides for the Métis Nation in critical program areas.

Lumping us in with a wide array of groups competing for the limited amount of funding available for "off-reserve" programs represented a total negation of a nation-to-nation relationship.

With the Métis Nation - Crown Summit now set for April 13, we expected the agenda to enable us to have an honest discussion with him and his Ministers on ways of ensuring that the federal budget works for the citizens of the Métis Nation.

In the weeks leading up to the Summit, I and my officials had many meetings and discussions with federal ministers and senior officials to turn things around.


At the commencement of the much-awaited Summit on April 13, Prime Minister Trudeau, I, and the Presidents of the Governing Members signed the Canada - Métis Nation Accord that sets out the terms and priorities of the Permanent Bilateral Mechanism.

Once the ceremony concluded and the media left the room, the Prime Minister got right down to business and confronted the issue of the budget.

He acknowledged the disappointment of the Métis Nation with the language in the Budget and his understanding that "words matter".

He stated that his government is sincerely committed to a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous communities, including the Métis Nation, and acknowledged that this promise was not reflected in the Budget.

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To use his words: “This will be corrected, starting today.”

On that note, he thanked me for my letter of March 27, 2017 and for the willingness to speak the truth to commence a frank and open dialogue.

The relationship between Canada and the Métis Nation must be grounded, he said, both in words and in deeds, in the recognition that the Métis Nation is a unique, distinct, rights-bearing community.

In response to the letter of March 27 which is in your kits, the Prime Minister had instructed his Ministers who are part of the ongoing bilateral process to prepare letters elaborating on those significant commitments.

The Ministers had an opportunity to go through them at the Summit.

Minister Bennett from Indigenous Affairs confirmed that out of the \$118 million allocated in the budget for the new Urban Indigenous Strategy over five years, there will be a Métis Nation specific allocation of \$36,350,000 or \$7.27 million annually to be managed by the Métis National Council and Governing Members.

She also committed to the Métis Nation’s fair share of the \$5 million in the budget over the next two years that was set aside for the Métis Nation, First Nations and

Inuit to participate in their respective bilateral processes.

In a joint letter, Minister Duclos from Families, Children and Social Development and Minister Hajdu from Employment, Workforce Development and Labour noted that the federal government was collaborating with the Métis Nation toward a renewed and expanded ASETS beyond 2018 including a Métis Nation specific approach.

They committed to providing us soon with the Métis Nation share of the additional \$50 million per year in ASETS funding.

They also committed to work with us in developing Métis Nation specific components of two large federal initiatives, the National Housing Strategy and the Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

The Prime Minister’s statements at the outset of the Summit indicated to me, and I believe to other Board members, that this process we were entering into that day was definitely something new.

Our Finance Minister David Chartrand captured that sentiment well in his critique of Budget 2017 at the Summit.

While reiterating our disappointment that the Budget did not reflect the Prime Minister’s

vision that the Métis do matter, Minister Chartrand expressed support for the bilateral process as it will provide regular opportunities for the Prime Minister and the Métis Nation leadership to meet and to hold each other accountable and this will result in real change.

The Prime Minister made two other particularly important statements that day which we should reflect on as we plan our way of moving forward with his government, one on the issue of our rights, particularly self-government, the other on accountability.

On the first issue, he recognized that the federal government has not been a good partner to the Métis Nation for a long time and wishes to change this situation.

The Métis Nation has fought for a long time to be recognized and to be treated as a legitimate government to serve its people, he said, but now, having won, it is not necessary to continue fighting.

The Federal Government wishes to move forward on the joint goal of building a strong and prosperous Métis Nation and to ensure that the recognition of the Métis Nation is established for the future.

He said the new challenge will be to determine the correct approach

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to work together to ensure that funds flow in the right way, by deferring to the expertise of the Métis Nation to determine the needs of its citizens, and to ensure that the Métis Nation is delivering those services.

On the issue of accountability, the Prime Minister acknowledged that his government's goal of arriving at a place where the expenditure of the funds is decided by the Métis Nation and delivers tangible benefits to all its citizens is frightening, as both the federal government and the Métis Nation have raised expectations of the Métis people.

He said this underscores the importance of working together to develop strategies to determine what needs to be done first, what needs to be done now and what can continue to be moved forward as the Métis Nation develops capacities of strength.

He also stated a number of times that the new relationship based on a recognition of rights also comes with responsibilities for both the federal government and the Métis Nation to work together in the most productive way for the benefit of the Métis people.

I believe the Prime Minister demonstrated strong leadership by taking responsibility for the mishandling of the Budget as it

pertains to the Métis Nation and taking steps to set the course right.

And by advising everybody in the Summit room that day that the "buck stops here" - that is with him and the leadership of the Métis Nation - on matters of importance in Canada - Métis Nation relations.

And that is a message which I believe can be appreciated by all the delegates of the Métis Nation General Assembly here today who collectively make up the leadership of the Métis Nation.

How can we ensure that we are up to the challenge of meeting the high expectations of our people for real change through our work with the Trudeau government?

The permanent bilateral process with Canada truly is an immense opportunity and challenge at the same time and we must prepare for it.

Just as the Prime Minister is committed to a whole of government approach in which multiple ministers would work with us as seamlessly as possible, I believe so too the Métis Nation and its governments should be prepared to adopt our own whole-of-government approach to meet this challenge.

Three ways come to mind.

The first is through the legislative and policy development work of this General Assembly through which the Métis Nation as a whole can deliberate on issues of common concern to all its citizens and Governing Members and adopt resolutions that will shape the positions that can then be taken forward to be discussed and negotiated with federal government.

In the past year, additional resources have made it possible for this Assembly to meet more often in special sittings and policy forums and undertake discussion of important policy matters leading to the adoption of these resolutions.

Our Métis Nation working groups and committees from the MNC and Governing Members have informed this work at the General Assembly.

For example, the joint work on a new federal urban strategy by senior officials from MNC and Governing Members and the Deputy Minister of INAC and her officials, and the resolutions adopted by this General Assembly on the issue, contributed greatly to the Métis Nation set-aside in the new Urban Indigenous Strategy.

Climate change and the Métis Nation Economic Development Strategy were the subject matter at two of the policy forums held in the past year and have resulted in

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resolutions that have been adopted or will be considered tomorrow for adoption.

There can be no doubt that when the Métis Nation speaks as a whole through these resolutions, our hand is strengthened in dealing with the federal government on these issues.

With the new governance funding, I believe we can move toward regular sittings of the General Assembly three or four times a year, in order to provide leadership with a strong mandate to pursue joint policy development with the federal government on priority issues identified in the Canada - Métis Nation Accord.

Which brings me to the second way in which we can use a whole-of-government approach to meet the challenges of the new bilateral process.

That would be through mobilizing all the resources of the MNC, the Governing Members and their affiliated institutions to collaborate on the groundwork required on policy priorities in advance of the meeting with the Prime Minister and the additional two meetings with multiple Ministers each year.

There is no doubt that at the Summit the Governing Member Presidents impressed upon the Prime Minister and his Ministers just how desperate is the need for

resources to address the needs of the Métis for housing, health care, and child care resources .

And that they will be expecting and demanding results in our annual stock-taking session with the Prime Minister.

At the same time, in order to expect results, they must be armed with the best evidence-based research and policy work in order to make the case for funding and how best to deploy resources.

This requires us to ensure the working groups on priority issues that we establish with the federal government can draw upon the expertise we have at the MNC and Governing Members, their ASETS teams, economic development corporations, housing agencies, educational institutes, family and child service agencies, health branches, amongst others.

In some areas like ASETS, health and environment, we have committees in place for some time to undertake this work.

In other areas, we will have to formalize our own internal collaborative efforts to deal with the priorities under the Accord on a sustained ongoing basis.

A third way of pursuing a whole-of-government approach to meet the challenges of the new bilateral

process will be in the area of constitutional reform.

This issue will take on increased importance for each Governing Member as each works toward s. 35 rights agreements with Canada, including self-government.

A constitution will serve as the cornerstone of each agreement from which the respective Métis Nation government will draw its authority to represent and adopt laws and policies for its citizens.

At the same time, there will be a need for a national constitution to determine how the citizens and governments of the Métis Nation will relate to each other.

A constitution that fully respects the jurisdictions of the Métis governments in the provinces but also enables the Métis people to act collectively on matters of national and international importance.

Tomorrow, we will go into the Accord signed with Canada in greater depth but I wish to conclude my State of the Nation by identifying those federal commitment areas where I believe we must seize the opportunity to make giant strides quickly.

The first will be locking down a new Métis Nation ASETS agreement which our Minister of Social Development will address

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this afternoon.

The second is capitalizing on the federal commitment to a Métis Nation specific component of two important federal initiatives: a national housing strategy and a national early learning and childcare framework.

The Trudeau government is dedicating enormous resources in these areas for all of Canada and it is absolutely essential that we stake our claim and begin the work on a set-aside as soon as possible.

The third commitment area is establishing new fiscal relations with the government of Canada.

As Minister Bennett stated at the Summit, the federal government wants out of the business of program funding and to move to self-determining nations through a long-term, stable, predictable and responsive approach to funding.

MNC and Governing Member senior officials have worked well together and with the INAC Deputy Minister to achieve the permanent and expanded registry and governance funding in Budget 2017.

I am confident that they can duplicate this success in forging a new approach to fiscal relations that capitalizes on the federal willingness to sit down and work out with us the financial transfer

mechanisms that support government-to-government relationships.

The fourth area of commitment is the most challenging as it includes two Métis Nation priorities - education and health care - where federal resistance to dealing with us has always been and still is the strongest.

At the same time, there is a growing federal recognition that while we receive these services from the Provinces, they have failed to address our distinct needs and rights and are ill-equipped to tackle the gaps and deficits we face in education and health care.

The Trudeau government's commitment in its Métis Nation policy to fulfill the Kelowna commitment to enhance and expand existing Métis Nation scholarships and bursaries remains unfulfilled.

Through the Canada - Métis Nation Accord tables, we must ensure this commitment is fulfilled through the expansion of our endowments while also securing federal support for enhancing and expanding Métis Nation educational institutes and for improving outcomes in the K-12 system.

We must also act quickly on the Health Minister's commitment to a

distinctions-based approach to the Head Start and health programs.

I should also note that in addition to these first year priorities in the Accord, the Métis Nation must muster its resources to work collectively on other related initiatives of the Trudeau government.

These includes the review of federal laws, policies and operational practices to ensure the Crown is meeting its constitutional and international obligations with respect to Aboriginal rights as well as the upcoming Indigenous Languages Act, which will recognize and serve to preserve and promote Indigenous languages, including Michif.

Through bodies such as the Métis Rights Panel, the MNC and Governing Members can collaborate productively on these federal legislative initiatives and inform the work of this General Assembly in determining the Métis Nation positions.

The Prime Minister stated in the Summit that in his role as Minister of Youth, he looks forward to engaging with Métis Nation Youth.

I reminded him that Métis youth had once been vigorously engaged at the national level but this was discontinued when the funding was eliminated.

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The Métis Nation is looking forward to reactivating and re-engaging with the National Youth Council.

The first year agenda of the Canada - Métis Nation Accord commits the Parties to examining the current array of supports available to Métis youth and identify best practices, programs or services that address the unique challenges of Métis Youth.

Métis Nation women's issues are an integral part of the permanent agenda for the bilateral process.

At the Summit, President Omeniho provided the Prime Minister and his Ministers with insight into those issues such as women's physical and mental health, the Head Start Program and access to child care which must be addressed by the Accord and the federal budget.

We must ensure that new opportunities opening up through

our work on the Accord, including new sources of funding, can be accessed by Métis women and men.

That is the only way that the Métis Nation as a whole and Métis families can make significant progress.

In closing, I call on all of you to join me in seizing the historic opportunities awaiting us through this new relationship with Canada.

At the same time, I encourage all of us to take a realistic look at our present situation.

The Prime Minister's commitment to a permanent joint process to redress historical wrongs and improve contemporary conditions is indeed heartening and we sincerely commend him for that.

At the same time, we know that "permanent" may mean no more than the slightly more than two years and two budgets left in the

Prime Minister's current term of office.

We all remember the exuberant feelings we had with Kelowna and how those high hopes were crushed with the defeat of the Martin government, ushering in a lost decade with the Harper government.

So let's hope for the best but be prepared for all contingencies in the next federal election.

In the meantime, let us roll up our sleeves and take advantage of the unprecedented opportunity that starts today.

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# Louis Riel On Stage

On April 20, 2017 President Chartier attended the opening night of the Louis Riel Opera in Toronto at the Four Seasons Centre. The Opera first hit the stage in 1967 as part of Canada's Centennial celebrations. The original production was the work of Harry Somers who felt that the struggle of Louis Riel and the Métis Nation should form part of the 1967 centennial narrative. That production hit the stage on October 23, 1967.



*Chief Justice of Canada The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlan in conversation with Stephen Toope*

For Canada's sesquicentennial year, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada, Somers' production was brought back to life by Director Peter Hinton with notable changes, such as Michif subtitles and particularly a more Indigenous presence.

the Opera on opening night" stated President Chartier, adding "that it was so refreshing and heart-lifting to see Louis Riel and the Métis Nation, and particularly Michif, having such a central role in an extraordinary rendition of the history of western Canadian."

The next day, April 21<sup>st</sup>, "HEARING RIEL: An Interdisciplinary Symposium" was held at the University of Toronto. The Symposium was well attended, with President Chartier providing opening



"I was extremely pleased to see

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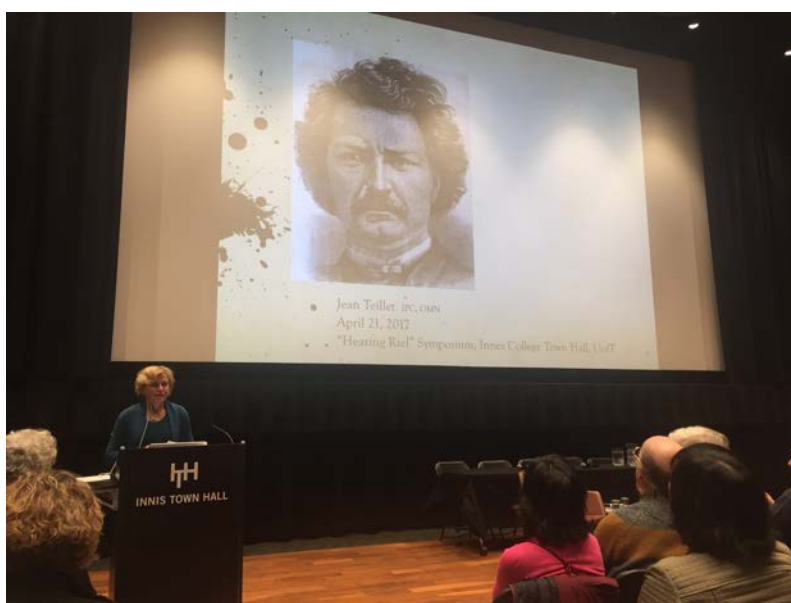
remarks. This was followed by the introduction of the Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin, Chief Justice of Canada by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, the 26<sup>th</sup> Governor General of Canada. The Chief Justice participated in 40 minute conversation with Stephen Toope and covered a lot of interesting history and analysis of Riel, the Métis Nation and western Canada generally, including First Nations and her growing up in Pincher Creek, Alberta.



This was followed by a 45 minute presentation by Jean Teillet which was well received

by the audience. Other


speakers included renowned author John Ralston Saul and Adam Gaudry, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta.



There was also a Roundtable composed of Peter Hinton, the Director of the Opera, along with others involved in the production, which solicited a lot of dialogue with the audience, most of whom were opera buffs.

The Symposium ended at 4:00 pm, followed by a Reception.





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## MNC Makes Indigenous Consultation Presentation at Mexico City Seminar



From March 1<sup>st</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, the Metis Nation participated in the *2nd Seminar on Indigenous Engagement, Consultation and Participation for Energy Resource Development Projects* in Mexico City. Indigenous peoples, industry, and government representatives from both Canada and Mexico participated in the seminar. This seminar was part of the Canada - Mexico Partnership.

At the Seminar, Al Benoit, on behalf of Metis National Council President Chartier and while on

leave endorsed by Manitoba Metis Federation President Chartrand, made a presentation entitled: *A Metis Nation Approach to Engagement, Consultation, and Accommodation: the Experience of the Manitoba Metis Community*. This shared one perspective on processes intended to encourage engagement, strengthen dialogue, and suggestions to move forward.

Mr. Benoit gave a brief history of the Metis Nation as well as our governance principles and institutional structures, and how these promote engagement and consultation, partnership and accommodation. His presentation was followed by remarks by other seminar panelists from Mexico's Indigenous peoples including the Yaqui as well as others from the pueblo Zapoteco de Juchitán and the pueblo Rarámuri de San Ignacio de Arareco.


Mr. Benoit's seminar participation and presentation

continues to build upon the prior work of President Chartier in advancing Indigenous rights and relationships throughout the Americas. President Chartier was in Mexico City from January 31 - February 3, 2017 as part of a Canada - Mexico Partnership delegation that included addressing Indigenous peoples and consultation in the Mining industry.

The Canada - Mexico Partnership was created in 2004 to promote public and private cooperation between the two countries. The delegation and seminar are two of the many forums designed to share experiences, create relationships, and analyze mutual interests in the areas of trade, investment, partnerships, business, education, and governance.

At the Seminar there were presentations and discussions about the importance of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

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Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as new 2016 Organization of American States (OAS) American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ADRIP), to assist creating frameworks for protecting rights and promoting engagement and consultation. President Chartier has been instrumental in developing Indigenous support for both declarations.

Other seminar participants discussed attempts within the Mexican and Canadian governments to promote planning and governance to inform policy development to implement engagement and consultation relationships and partnerships in both countries. Of increasing interest in both Canada and Mexico is the development of innovative conflict resolution processes to avoid and resolve land and resource conflicts. This was also explored through panel discussion.

Mexico has a constitutional and legal framework very different from Canada. Here in Canada we often rely on our rights being

recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the 1982 Constitution Act, and protected through the courts. When a government makes a decision or a proponent takes an action that infringes on our claims, rights, or interests, then we make legal preparations to go to the courts.

In Mexico there are few constitutional protections to support Indigenous peoples rights and, therefore, court action. Because of this the Mexican government, industry proponents, and Indigenous peoples are searching for alternatives to social discord and violent conflict and are exploring and developing innovative options for mediation and dialogue. Increasingly, UNDRIP is becoming a part of this narrative. The OAS ADRIP will be soon sure to follow.

To promote future discussion, two drafts sets of recommendations were developed during the seminar: one from the panelists; and, a second from the audience. Among the recommendations was promoting, and supporting

partnerships and exchanges between the Indigenous peoples of Canada and Mexico to share knowledge, experience, and best practices. President Chartier supports this and other initiatives to increase the Metis Nation's role and recognition among the Indigenous peoples throughout North, Central, and South America, and beyond.





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## A Métis Patriot's Long Journey Home

In advance of the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the Battle of Vimy Ridge on April 9, 2017, a Métis Nation delegation in France visits Juno Beach where Lennard Morin of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, finds the grave of his uncle who died days after the D-Day landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944.

Lennard Morin is the well-known Regional Director for Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Eastern Region I whose tireless efforts led to the establishment of the Métis Veterans Memorial Monument. The Monument was unveiled to the public at the Batoche Memorial Garden on July 19, 2014 and commemorates the Métis Nation veterans who served our country during the Boer War, World War I, World War II and the Korean War. The site draws many relatives and descendants of Métis Nation veterans, all eager to



locate their family hero among the thousands of names inscribed on the monument. (learn more about Métis Veterans Memorial Monument, please visit: <http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/news/metis-veterans-memorial-monument-unveiled-in-batoche>

On April 7, 2017, it was Morin himself searching names on the close to 3,000 graves in the Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian

War Cemetery in Normandy France. He was searching for his uncle, Napoleon Morin, who died days after the landing of Canadian troops at Juno Beach on June 6, 1944. See his amazing search and discovery in the video. (<http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/news/a-metis-patriot%E2%80%99s-long-journey-home>)







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## To Vimy, Juno Beach and Back

President Chartrand of the Manitoba Metis Federation, also the Métis National Council's Minister of Veterans Affairs, reflects on his travels to Vimy Ridge and Juno Beach as part of the delegation led by Prime Minister Trudeau.

The trip started with excitement, to visit Vimy Ridge, France, the very place where our young Métis warriors went to defend a people they didn't even know 100 years ago. Adding further to the challenge, they were there to fight for a country that didn't see them as a people. Just 30 years earlier, Canada had sent its army to attack the same Métis Nation that had stood to defend its homes and families, killing many of our warriors in the battle of Batoche.

This didn't stop the fighting spirit of our people to defend those that can't defend themselves. So it was the buffalo hunters who jumped into those ships, joining in hundreds, then thousands, virtually emptying many of our communities. At

home, they had become landless people who some called the road allowance people but they had gone to fight for Canada to defend strangers who were losing their lands, their homes, their future.

Let's talk about the great heroes. First, starting with Vimy Ridge, the battle that changed the First World War 100 years ago, where our sons of Canada, our sons of the Metis Nation, went to the battle which can only be described as HELL. The size of two football fields they fought through mud and rain infested by rats, sickness, the smell of death. The artillery fire we heard was deafening. The hell of those 4 days when the casualties of our sons numbered over 3500 dead, 7000 injured. Some described the painful sound of



those screaming for help, as they lay in water and mud dying a slow death. The exchange of bullets was so endless, you were ordered not to stop as you saw your brother beg for help drowning in mud and water and in his own blood.

The horror didn't stop there; many brought it home to

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remain in their lives, in their minds forever. The warriors who joined as kids won the victory but lost the war as the psychological effects would never end.

One great memory that can be taken from this war ridden hell hole is the great monument that stands in honour forever to remind us never to forget what was sacrificed in Vimy- what we lost but what we gained! This 100 year remembrance was very



special as our sons, our warriors were honored by over 10,000 students from Canada who saw first hand the evidence of what was lost. I'm sure the learning experience will last a life time and I hope they will tell the stories to their friends and they tell their friends and so on. So the memory, the story must live forever. There were also thousands of Europeans and people from all over the world on hand to tell our great warriors: thank you-you matter.

The second visit was to Juno Beach, Normandy a battle that happened 27 years later where

the loss of Canadians was again staggering. The beach was filled with our boys laying either dead in the water or lying dead on the sand. It didn't stop our brave warriors, as again Canada proved our fighting fearless fighters were up to the task. The casualties were great, again we lost so many of young soldiers. It should be amazing to the world to see our country with such a small population producing some of the greatest warriors in the world. A museum has now been built on the beach of Juno to honour our great warriors, the sacrifices they made and never forgetting

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the sacrifices their families made.

We must never forget, we must always honour them. I took the opportunity to bring some sand from Juno Beach to keep in my office, to always keep alive for our Métis Nation the reminder that it was our Métis boys who came to the aid of Europe one more time.

I can tell the Métis families as I visited one of the graveyards that it was in immaculate condition. Our time was short, as the Prime Minister's schedule was tight, but I found L. Chartrand's grave from Camperville and laid one of our Metis pins on his grave on behalf of the Métis Nation and his family.

Although this trip was short, it was intense. For two days we



*President Chartier and MNO and MNBC contingents at the National War Memorial following the National ceremony to remember the Battle of Vimy Ridge.*

were in the most historic locations of the great wars. As your president, I carried our nation's presence with great honour and pride. On behalf of our soldiers, who now lay in the foreign land and many graveyards in Europe, and also those who

lay in their graveyards at home, and to the families, I say thank you on behalf of Métis government. Let's all reflect on the great honour of our heroes, our soldiers, and our warriors! WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!





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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Manitoba Metis Heritage Fund's first annual charity event "A Night to Remember"  
May 12 Winnipeg, MB
- Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Election May 27 Saskatoon, SK
- Louis Riel Opera June 15 & 17 Ottawa, ON
- Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly June 19-21 Mexico City, Mexico
- Council of the Federation (COF) Meeting July 17-19 Edmonton, AB
- MNC Reconciliation Conference and Special Sitting of the General Assembly  
July 19-20 Saskatoon, SK
- Back to Batoche July 21-23 Batoche, SK
- Métis Nation of Alberta AGA Aug 10-12 Peace River, AB
- Métis Nation of Ontario AGA Aug 19-21 Kenora, ON
- Manitoba Metis Federation AGA Sept 23-24 Winnipeg, MB
- Métis Nation of British Columbia AGM Sept 23-24 Dawson Creek, BC







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