



Office of the Provincial President

August 17, 2021

Dear Minister Burnouf:

Maarsii. Thank you for agreeing to serve the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) as Minister of Language.

This mandate letter describes the progress made to date in this portfolio and your responsibilities and priorities moving forward. It also outlines how I expect you to conduct yourself as a Minister and work with other Ministers, members of the Provincial Métis Council (PMC), and fellow citizens. As accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of good government, I am making these letters public, so all citizens are informed of how their government is working for them.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Revitalization of Michif: Partnership with Canadian Geographic

Revitalizing the Michif language is critical to rebuilding our Nation. In January 2020, our government announced a partnership with Canadian Geographic to create the Future of Michif Program. This multifaceted-educational initiative, grounded in historical and ancestral knowledge, is designed to get more Métis citizens to speak their traditional language and celebrate Michif and Métis culture. It includes a Michif Language Speakers Bureau to promote and teach Michif, an online Michif language conversation forum, a feature story in the Canadian Geographic Magazine on the Michif language with an associate poster map to reach millions of Canadians, and a Michif language training program.

With COVID-19, we have been working with Canadian Geographic to ensure these initiatives can be done virtually. In partnership with the Director of ELCC, MN-S is currently working with Métis early learning educators to create ten videos to highlight Métis culture. The videos are in production and will be available to over 25,000 Canadian teachers and over 4 million people worldwide. We are also working on the Michif Language Speakers Bureau and have currently brought in male and female Métis citizens and Elders from the north, central and southern parts of the province. A podcast series was developed to highlight a variety of topics on Métis way of life and feature different guests. The podcast series is an ongoing project. Finally, our resident Elder, Norman Fleury is working on text translation for the Michif Atlas.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- Revitalization of the Michif language and the Dene language, where spoken by Métis families.
- Expanded access to Michif and Dene instruction in the K-12 curriculum.



- Relationships with Language Keepers, Indigenous Services Canada, Heritage Canada, Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, and school boards.

PRIORITIES

I expect you to work constructively with your colleagues, members of the PMC, and citizens to deliver on the following priorities. We want to increase the number of Michif and Dene speakers across the province. To accomplish this objective:

- Develop a Michif and Dene language strategy focused on the protection, promotion and preservation of language. This will be created in consultation with Language Keepers and Knowledge Keepers of the Métis Nation.
- Access long-term and sustainable financial resources to support and build language capacity to promote and revitalize the Michif and Dene languages at the regional level.
- Explore the feasibility of a Michif Language Institute to work on Michif and Dene language preservation and revitalization. Among other areas, the institute would be the “Keeping House” or repository of the Michif and Dene language and a centre to serve Métis regions, communities and individuals working to revitalize Michif (3 dialects) and Dene languages in Saskatchewan. The centre would provide the tools and training to help Michif and Dene language teachers and learners help themselves in their efforts to bring language back into the everyday lives of the Métis People.
- Support the Minister of Education and Early Learning to have Michif and Dene language learning as part of the K-12 curriculum throughout the province. Over the next year, work in partnership with ELCC and Education to launch, implement and monitor the success of the Michif Early Learning Pilot Project and Dene Early Learning Pilot Project. Based on the outcomes, over the next five years, expand the program across the province and throughout K-12.
- Work with the Minister of Youth to ensure this work includes the unique perspectives of Métis youth.
- Work closely with Canadian Geographic to complete the deliverables set out in Year One of the Revitalization of the Michif Language Project.
- Work with the support of Canadian Geographic to develop a set of deliverables and objectives for the Year Two of the Revitalization of the Michif Language Project.
- Support the Ministers of Women and Gender Equality and Justice in the development of a plan to address the situation of violence against Métis women, female Elders, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons in Saskatchewan.
- Support the Minister of Justice in the Constitutional Reform process to update and modernize our *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* and related legislation to ensure they are grounded on our Métis laws and that we create legislative frameworks that will continue to serve our citizens and Métis Nation as we move towards self-government.



EXPECTATIONS FOR MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

All Members of the Executive must act with honesty and uphold the highest ethical standards in their personal and professional lives. Métis citizens' confidence and trust in the integrity of government is essential. Our Executive Handbook was updated in November 2019 by the PMC. It affirms that all Ministers must adhere to strict standards of conduct guided by the principles of integrity, accountability, responsibility, leadership, respect and openness. I encourage you to routinely consult the Executive Handbook and use it as a guiding resource in your work.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities listed above, there is also an obligation to support and advance the overall priorities of this government. Confidentiality, solidarity and collective responsibility are critical to good governance and must be the foundation of how we work together. Our Executive Handbook outlines the meaning of solidarity. Ministers may disagree and state their personal opinions during private meetings. At the same time, to the public, they must present a unified front on all decisions and support all decisions made by their fellow Ministers. Collectively, Ministers are accountable for these decisions, even if they do not personally agree with them.

All Ministers must work collaboratively with each other and all members of the PMC to establish good communication. We will ensure policies and programs reflect the needs and aspirations of Métis citizens. The unique challenges that rural and urban citizens face are considerations in decision-making. Every attempt should be made to consult with and obtain the views of Members of the PMC, local Presidents, community members, Métis women, youth, 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, Elders, and other experts.

As we strengthen our working partnerships with First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan, you are expected to conduct yourself in a respectful and cooperative manner. Delivering success for our citizens requires good working partnerships with external partners and being solutions-oriented.

Our government has zero-tolerance for unethical behaviour. All Ministers are obligated to question any request or decision that they think may be unethical or unlawful. Rules and the proper protocol for addressing alleged breaches can be found in section 7.0 of the Executive Handbook.

As we rebuild our Nation, we know we have a lot of work to do. Part of this journey must include recognizing the devastating impact colonialism and land dispossession have had on our communities, kinship, and governance. Lateral violence is endemic across the Métis Nation. We need to understand how we are going to discard colonial attitudes and re-invigorate Métis laws and ways of living together. In particular, we need to critically examine how we will reinstate the vital role Métis women, girls and two-spirit persons traditionally played in our societies. This work must include addressing and ending systemic violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. We must also continue to ensure equal representation of women in all levels of our government, and that these perspectives and needs be reflected in decision-making.

Our people have fought for over a century for recognition, respect, and our rightful place as a



self-determining people. Over the past three years, we have made substantial progress towards realizing the visions of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. From signing the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement with Canada, investing in housing, education and economic development, making real progress on the negotiation of the North-West land claim, and strengthening our internal governance, we have made momentous strides in a relatively short time. This year, our communities have faced a significant challenge to our health and safety: COVID-19. We came together to support citizens, deliver PPE and provide critical support for housing, childcare, and Métis businesses. While we must remain vigilant to ensure everyone's safety, we should all be proud of how we have supported each other during such unprecedented times.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve the MN-S and its citizens. I am here to support you in your role as Minister. Together, we will continue to carry the torch of those great leaders who came before us. We can, and we will, succeed in fully realizing the vision of a strong, self-determining, accountable government for all of us as Métis people in this province.

Much respect



Glen McCallum
President

