



Wednesday, March 21st, 2018

For Immediate Release

Via email and BCMF website

BC Métis Federation Announces Establishment of the Department of Métis Child Welfare

(Vancouver, BC) In response to the large numbers of Métis children in the care of the Province of British Columbia, BC Métis Federation has taken it upon ourselves today to announce the establishment of our Department of Métis Child Welfare which is set up to care for our Métis children within our community. BC Métis Federation is responding to deep concerns for our Métis children, such as Métis children who are being kept in non-Indigenous foster placements and who are being denied their Métis cultural birthright.

BC Métis Federation is responding to the large numbers of Métis children who are critically injured and dying while in the care of the Director. We respond to the report from the Representative for Children and Youth in December 2017 who confirms that since the enactment of the Adoption Act in 1996 to include Custom Adoption, there has not been a single recognition of a custom adoption in the BC Courts in 26 years.

BC Métis Federation President Keith Henry states; “The situation as it stands is intolerable. We have made every effort to work with the Provincial Government to help them find solutions but there is a large gap in understanding or willingness to change the systemic issues within their Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).”

BC Métis Federation President Henry added; “MCFD is continuing with the removal of Métis children from our parents, often at birth, and works within a system which draws upon tools such as those of an exceptions committee and a contracted designated agency that claims to represent all Métis of British Columbia. These tools were put in place to give the appearance of Métis cultural support and reconciliation while, in truth, these mechanisms do not produce positive results and the 60’s scoop has now become the millennium scoop. We are here today to say that this ends now.

The BC Métis Federation has enacted a plan for caring for the Métis children within our community. We have established a Department of Child Welfare which will meet the specific needs of our members whose children are involved with MCFD.

BC Metis Federation President Henry concluded; “We are not asking any level of government permission to do this. We do not ask for designated recognition or funding. We are informing our members that we are taking responsibility for our children and we alone will determine, together with our community families, what is right for the protection of our Métis children within the BC Métis Federation. We are not part of, nor do we exist under any other Métis community or designated agency. We do not recognize Métis agencies that have contracted Protocol Agreements with MCFD. We do not trust any agency with a contracted agreement not to fetter the decision of the MCFD Director to be able to effectively act for our children without a conflict of interest. These agencies do not speak for our community. We do not recognize MCFD



Exceptions Committees which exist and meet each month for the sole purpose of placing Métis children for adoption in non-Métis homes.”

The BC Métis Federation will be responsible for any child whose family is in membership with our community. This is in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of the Right of Indigenous Peoples and the Constitution of Canada 1982.

Customary Indigenous laws are protected in Canada. BC Métis Federation has never signed away our rights for our children. Today’s announcement is designed to assist members for the protection of our children and families. The BC Métis Federation community will work together to protect and strengthen our families.

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