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Immediate Release

Sent by Email and BCMF Website

Premier Remarks and Saskatchewan Party Nomination Demonstrate Lack of Respect for Métis History

(Vancouver, BC) BC Métis Federation leadership is questioning comments made by current Premier of Saskatchewan Honourable Brad Wall at their Saskatoon Meewasin nomination meeting held this past January 30th, 2017 at the Ramada Hotel http://www.saskparty.com/yxemeewasin_nomination.

During the nomination meeting Premier Wall stated to an entire room with hundreds in attendance that, "Delbert Kirsch is the member for Batoche. There's Delbert. We each get to make a speech in the legislature and Delbert's I will never forget. Delbert stood up in the legislature looking like he's looking right now—he's got a nice beard—and said a number of wonderful things about his constituency and his team and how happy he was to be elected to the legislative assembly. But then he confessed to being a little bit nervous, he said, based on the historical reality that happened to the last bearded man that came down from Batoche to the city of Regina (*laughter*). That's one of the best lines I've ever heard."

BC Métis Federation President Henry stated, "This commentary is completely unacceptable to Métis people. We have attached the recorded speech so there is no doubt in the authenticity of this situation. Premier Wall is recognized throughout Canada as a leader and to repeat such an insensitive commentary about the wrongful hanging of Louis Riel is insensitive and foolish. This at a time when so many of us are trying to achieve reconciliation and respect. Premier Wall may not realize this but there were Métis people in attendance who felt embarrassed and ashamed by his choice of words and the support in the room to laugh at one of Canada's most shameful moments in history."

BC Métis Federation President Henry concluded, "Sadly this may demonstrate the undertone of his bias. He likely felt that this commentary was made in humor and not meant to disrespect or showcase racism for Métis people. My own Métis family history has a deep connection to Batoche and Fish Creek and I am outraged by anyone laughing at what our ancestors fought for. The wrongful prosecution and hanging of Louis Riel should never be meant as comic relief for insensitive politicians as many of our Métis people want Louis Riel exonerated as another step towards reconciliation. I call on Premier Wall to apologize for these grossly insensitive comments and encourage his political party colleagues to demonstrate better judgement in the future."

For more information about the BC Métis Federation go to www.bcmétis.com.

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