



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee Condemns the Remarks of Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister regarding the restoration of Statues

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) Grand Chief Garrison Settee is responding to the remarks of Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister regarding the restoration of the statues pulled down during one of the awareness events of First Nations people and their allies that were triggered by the 215 unmarked graves found in Kamloops, British Columbia. The number of unmarked graves in Canada has since risen to over 1500 to date, including 104 at the former Brandon residential school site, 54 that remain unmarked in a RV recreational site in Brandon, and many more that have not yet been recovered in Manitoba.

“The Premier talks of ‘building up’ and being a ‘beacon of light’ to people around the world and, almost as an afterthought, to the Indigenous people of this country. The Premier misses the point and forgets that the awareness events were for the Indigenous children and babies that were murdered and buried in unmarked graves throughout Canada by the same colonial ‘ancestors’ he speaks of. They were about bringing justice to those young children and ensuring they are given the proper burials that they were denied.”

“Mr. Premier, I say to you, look into your heart and revise your commentary regarding the thousands of children that were raped, murdered, and tortured in these institutions of genocide. Your attempt to downplay the seriousness of genocide by mentioning ‘all people of the world’ is pitiful.”

“The commentary and words of the Premier regarding this issue are from the perspective of a colonial settler, a colonial squatter on the lands of Indigenous Peoples. His privilege shines through in his attempt to bring a positive tone to his views and a veiled attempt to condemn the rightful actions of our people and our allies. Not once does the Premier mention residential schools and the Indigenous children that were taken and murdered at these institutions.”

“This is nothing more than a deliberate attempt by the Premier to keep Manitobans in the dark about Manitoba’s true history and leave it for future generations to reconcile. However, I believe Manitobans are more intelligent and want change for the betterment of all. If Brian Pallister as the Premier of the Province of Manitoba refuses to acknowledge the thousands of children that were killed in residential schools, then there can be no reconciliation. I have no choice but to condemn his words and actions on behalf of the thousands of children, families, and generations of our people that were devastated by these institutions. We continue to feel these impacts to this day.”

“It is unfortunate and shameful for a Premier to make light of the deaths of thousands of children and the attempts by their families and all Indigenous Peoples to bring justice for them,” concluded Grand Chief Settee.

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