



Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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MKO Statement in Response to ‘Apology’ from Manitoba Premier

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing the following statement to respond to an ‘apology’ issue by the office of Manitoba’s Premier as we continue to mourn the loss of thousands of children due to residential schools throughout the country.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

“I want to thank all Manitoba and Canadian citizens who have reached out to MKO’s office to express that they stand in solidarity with Indigenous people as we continue to mourn the loss of our innocent children.

Many people across Canada have come to learn the true intentions of residential schools, thanks to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission along with the testimonies of survivors. I thank all those who have worked tirelessly to ensure the truth about residential schools is clear.

For weeks, Indigenous leaders have been calling for the resignation as well as an apology from Premier Brian Pallister in response to the untrue statements he made about the intentions behind residential schools. It is telling that it took Mr. Pallister nearly one month to respond to our requests for an apology. I’m not sure that today’s supposed apology goes far enough. The damage has already been done and the Premier continues to make it clear that he isn’t interested in advancing reconciliation.

The Premier says it’s important to collaborate and work in partnership with Indigenous leaders. Which Indigenous leaders is Mr. Premier working with? I can tell you that I have not had any meetings with the Premier of Manitoba since April 5, 2020. Our meeting on that date was about five minutes and I was barely able to get a word in.

I’m not convinced the Premier has apologized. His wording seems to imply he is simply sorry that listeners ‘misunderstood’ the intentions of his comments. If he truly wants to work with Indigenous peoples, I invite him to call my office and set up a one-on-one meeting with the MKO Chiefs and myself. I also encourage him to take a close look at all the Bills he is trying to pass. There are many with which First Nations do not agree. He hasn’t listened to us on the concerns we are trying to raise.

The fact it took nearly a month to respond to our calls for an apology tells me that the pressure Manitobans and Canadians put on him worked. Since he won’t listen to or meet with First Nations leadership in the province he purports to lead, I call on Manitobans and Canadians to continue to stand with us and press Mr. Pallister to do the right thing and resign.”

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For more information:

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