



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO's Response to Manitoba's Speech from the Throne

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement in response to the Speech from the Throne, which opened the fourth session of the 42nd legislature. Lieutenant Governor **Janice C. Filmon** shared the speech in Treaty One Territory this afternoon.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee provides this statement in response to the speech:

“This afternoon was historic. Having the drum opening for the Speech from the Throne was important as the drum is essential to our culture. This is something I have not seen before in a provincial Speech from the Throne.

There is hope on the horizon for a new journey with the provincial government. As First Nations leaders, we were never really at the table and now we have the opportunity to be at the table as equals.

We need to see action, solutions, impact, accountability, and autonomy for First Nations. We also want to see strong relationships that include reciprocity and a focus on a good life for MKO citizens.

We are pleased to see the Government of Manitoba express its focus on the health and well-being of all Manitobans with a focus on respect, reconciliation, and repairing broken relationships. Today we heard the government affirm its commitment to working with Indigenous peoples to advance shared goals and promote truth and reconciliation, along with their recognition of the need to co-develop action plans.

While the government expressed that it recognizes the ‘deep damage caused by residential schools and colonization,’ it is essential that this government continue to acknowledge the issue of unmarked graves at the site of residential schools along with the continuing concern of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit, and gender-diverse people. These are things that haunt us. Non-Indigenous people want to know how to be part of the healing process and it's important to continue to discuss these issues.

I'm grateful the government acknowledged the need to focus on the findings and recommendations of the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Murdered and Missing Women Inquiry reports, together with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*—these reports should not be sitting on shelves gathering dust as they provide the guidance needed to address many of the issues resulting from colonization that need to be resolved.

As MKO Grand Chief, I will continue to advocate on a wide variety of issues impacting Northern First Nations, including health transformation; child welfare; justice and policing; missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ peoples; economic development; climate change; and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

All Manitobans can benefit from stronger relationships with First Nations people. When there is dialogue, there is opportunity for action. It is time for us to work on concrete solutions and I remain optimistic that this is a new day and a new era.”

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