



MEMORANDUM

TO: MNA Citizens

FROM: President Audrey Poitras

DATE: April 23, 2014

RE: The Daniels Case – *Daniels v. Canada*

I am writing you today to celebrate the April 17, 2014 decision of the Federal Court of Appeal in the *Daniels v. Canada* case.

Section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act (1867)* identifies that the federal government has exclusive legislative authority with respect to “Indians, and Lands reserved for Indians.” This decision upholds the decision of lower courts and confirms that Métis are, for jurisdictional purposes, “Indians” within the meaning of section 91(24).

While I do applaud this decision I want to emphasize to you this does not change who we are as individual Métis citizens or collectively as a Métis Nation. The issue of jurisdiction is an important one for us as citizens of the MNA, but it does not change who we are culturally, socially, or politically.

I am also pleased that this decision recognized Métis to be a distinct Aboriginal people and that it did not contravene the Supreme Court of Canada decisions in *Powley*, *Cunningham* or *Manitoba Métis Federation* decisions in this regard.

I do not expect that there will be an immediate change to programs and services that will be made available to Métis nor do I expect the federal government will immediately begin offering any type of benefits to Métis that they currently provided to Inuit and First Nations.

However, what I do expect is this decision will serve as a call to action for the federal government to come to the table and to deal with the Métis Nation on a government to government basis to reconcile past injustices and the exclusion of Métis from federal programs that are offered to First Nations and Inuit.

I encourage the federal government not to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court and to sit down with the Métis Nation leaders and carve out a win-win scenario not only for Métis but for all of Canada.

This decision did not uphold the ruling of the lower court in regard to non-status Indians are “Indians” within the meaning of section 91(24).

In closing, I would like to thank the late Harry Daniels for leading this fight and for initiating this court action in 1999. This decision is a positive benefit for all Métis people and I believe we should all pay tribute to Harry Daniels and his family for pushing the agenda on Métis rights and recognition.

Sincerely,

Audrey Poitras

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey Poitras". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President
Métis Nation of Alberta

For more information contact:

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