



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 6, 2021

Statement on Conservative MPs letter to Premier regarding Legislative Statues

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – “It was brought to my attention that Federal Conservative Manitoba Members of Parliament (MPs) took it upon themselves to direct a formal letter to Premier Pallister yesterday regarding the incidents that took place on the Manitoba Legislative grounds on July 1, 2021.

These MPs, while quite measured in their remarks, ended the correspondence with a call for the two statues to be replaced immediately with the very same statues that were taken down. To this, I take great exception.

Replacing these statues with the very same colonial figureheads, whilst bypassing any First Nation engagement or consideration on what statues best teach the history of this province is tone deaf, ignorant and beyond disrespectful. What is the point of maintaining the status quo? Where is the recognition of the role of First Nations in this province? What was our peaceful ‘No Pride in Genocide’ march down the streets of Winnipeg and simultaneous marches throughout the country in solidarity with First Nations for? The world is speaking out and calling for change in the form of action and reconciliation. So, why would we simply repeat colonial and tragic history by re-erecting the same colonial representations? These MPs should read the room instead of catering to their far-right base.

I’d be remiss to note that this is a letter from the Federal Conservatives and directed to Provincial Conservatives without any pause to consider input from First Nations. Where was the First Nations engagement? I have met with this federal caucus twice now to outline a better working relationship. Have we been unclear that First Nations require a seat at the table in a directional and leadership role? I believe the AMC has made this quite clear.

I note that provincial Ministers Friesen and Clarke moved quickly to contact me personally within minutes of the incident occurring on July 1st. I appreciated that swift and open communication. This letter from Federal MPs was drafted with seven signatures so clearly a conversation between them was had. It is unfortunate that there was no place for First Nations at this discussion.

What was needed and is still needed (and appears to be falling on deaf ears within the Federal Conservatives) is First Nation input and direction in these triggering and difficult times. Canada

has paused to take a hard look in the mirror at its indiscretions and so too should the Federal Conservatives,” stated AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.