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SCO RESPONDS TO DANGEROUS REMARKS MADE BY PREMIER BRIAN PALLISTER REGARDING CANADA'S COLONIAL HISTORY

Pallister attempting to rewrite Canada's dark past during a painful time – Grand Chief Daniels

July 9, 2021

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is dismayed and deeply disappointed with Premier Brian Pallister's dangerous and wildly inaccurate remarks this past week regarding the restoration of colonial statues and the truth of Canada's colonial past.

“Premier Pallister again showed his true colours this week, aligning himself with colonialism and genocide instead of offering support and care to people who are suffering,” stated SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. “The events on July 1st were meant to honour the lost children and to bring awareness to residential schools and their continued harmful effects on our people and communities. Pallister instead focused on the needs and intentions of colonialists who were responsible for these crimes.”

On Wednesday, Premier Brian Pallister spoke about restoring statues that were taken down by protestors during one of several July 1st awareness-raising events focused on residential schools, including the more than 150-thousand children stolen from their families and the thousands who never made it home. The number of unmarked graves discovered in Canada over the past few months is now more than one thousand, including 104 unmarked graves at the former Brandon residential school site in southern Manitoba. Instead of reaching out to offer support and understanding, Premier Pallister chose to defend some of the worst actions ever committed in the name of 'Canada'.

“The premier knew exactly what he was doing when he spoke positively of Canada's colonial past, glossing over the stealing of our lands, children, and attempted destruction of our peoples and cultures,” added Grand Chief Daniels. “What we are really talking about is the kidnapping and killing of thousands of our children as a form of genocide. These are some of the worst crimes known to humankind. So much has been stolen from us and the last thing in this world that we need during a time of grief and pain is for the premier to defend the very actions that continue to hurt our people to this day”.

Premier Pallister spoke about the importance of “building up” and not “tearing down” and committed to restoring the statues at the legislature. He did not speak of the crimes committed against First

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Nations and Indigenous Peoples for centuries, despite the many calls around the world for justice and full transparency by governments and the Catholic Church surrounding residential schools

“SCO is committed, fully and passionately, to finding all of the unmarked graves of our Relatives across Turtle Island, to working with families, and to advocating for all records to be released and for every avenue of legal justice to be implemented, under Canadian and international law,” concluded Grand Chief Daniels. “These issues cannot be made light of; they’re crimes against humanity and that is how we are treating them.”

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The Southern Chiefs’ Organization represents 34 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations and more than 80,000 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples’ inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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