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SCO STATEMENT ON PALLISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement Could Not Come Any Sooner – Grand Chief Daniels

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 11, 2021

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is pleased to hear confirmation that premier Brian Pallister will not stand for re-election and will stand down as premier before the end of his second term.

"I have been very clear in my belief that Pallister was no longer fit to serve as premier of what is now Manitoba, and I called for his resignation last week following his underwhelming apology regarding his whitewashed and deeply dangerous version of Manitoba's colonial history," said SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. "Throughout his premiership, Pallister showed his contempt towards First Nation and Indigenous peoples, and he regularly disrespected our constitutional, Inherent, and Treaty rights. Yesterday's announcement is welcome. It's a new day with fresh opportunities for relations with our provincial Treaty partner. We hope that Pallister's successor will work with the First Peoples of this land, instead of working against us."

The recent weeks and months have been rocky for Pallister and his cabinet as Pallister made comments regarding colonizers who "didn't come here to destroy anything, they came here to build." Pallister stood by those comments for many weeks afterwards, only apologizing "for the misunderstanding" after much criticism as well as the resignation of his respected former Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Eileen Clarke.

The whitewashing of history continued as his new Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Affairs, Dr. Alan Lagimodiere, expanded on Pallister's earlier comments by claiming the people responsible for residential schools "really did believe they were doing the right thing at the time".

This summer's comments were not an isolated incident as Pallister often spoke out or made policy directed against First Nations throughout his time as premier, including saying that night hunting issues in Manitoba would lead to a "race war," that prioritizing Indigenous people for COVID-19 vaccines would leave the province in a precarious place when it came to the allocation of doses as well as the many ongoing disputes between the province and First Nations over gaming, harvesting, and fishing jurisdiction, flood mitigation, child welfare, and resource development.

"I want to express my deepest hope that the new provincial leader will lead as a Treaty partner. We can't continue in the current state, there is too much at stake for all of us. The new provincial leadership needs to recognize and respect First Nations as we lead in areas such as economic reconciliation,

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health care, child welfare, justice reform, and the management of resources and infrastructure on our lands. We can only achieve greatness as a province if there is a true partnership with First Nations, and we all deserve this,” concluded Grand Chief Daniels.

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The Southern Chiefs’ Organization represents 34 First 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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