

Quick Facts on Metis Land Claims in Manitoba

Some people believe that the 1,400,000 acres of land set aside for the children of Metis families under Section 31 of the *Manitoba Act*, was a huge amount of land. However, when one considers that the Metis made up 82.25% of Manitoba's population (Census of December 1870) this amount (one-seventh) was not large. In fact, the Canadian government was soon giving out free land by the fistful to the Hudson's Bay Company, the soldiers of the Red River Expeditionary Force, the school system, the railways, the Icelandic settlers and the Mennonite settlers. Most of these entities received patents to their land long before the Metis. This was due to the fact that the government was throwing up a series of legal and administrative roadblocks so the Metis were denied patent to their lands.

- May 2nd 1670, Charles II of England grants Rupert's Land to the HBC. = 1,244,160 sq. km.
- Hudson's Bay Co. grant to the Earl of Selkirk in 1811 (116,000 square miles) = 74, 240,000 acres
- Boundary between Canada and the United States is set in 1818 at the 49th parallel (across the prairies).
- The "Postage Stamp" Province of Manitoba was created in 1870 = 8,320,000 acres
- The *Manitoba Act* set the Manitoba boundaries as commencing at the point where the meridian of 96° west longitude (passing near Whitemouth) intersects the 49° parallel, then west along the 49th parallel to the meridian of 99° west longitude (passing just west of Portage la Prairie), then north to the intersection of 99° west with the parallel of 50° 30' north latitude then east to the meridian of 96° west longitude.

1870: *The Manitoba Act* and the Metis settlement scheme to fulfill promises made to the Metis; as can be seen the government was slow to make good on the promises:

Metis Children's Grants

- 1877: First patent issued.
- 1881: Half of patents issued.
- 1890: Last patent issued.
- 1919: Last supplementary scrip issued.

Metis Parents Scrip

- 1876: First scrip issued.
- 1876: Half of scrip issued.
- 1907: Last scrip issued.

Existing River Lot Titles Confirmed

1874: First patent issued
1881: Half of patents issued.
1929: Last patent issued.

Hay Land Confirmation and Compensation

1876: First scrip issued.
1882: Half of scrip issued.
1918: Last scrip issued.
1877: First patent issued.
1881: Half of patents issued.
1927: Last patent issued.

Dominion Lands Act Provisions for Land Distribution:

April 14, 1872, the *Dominion Lands Act* was proclaimed.

In this Act land reserved for the Hudson's Bay Co. is remembered in Sections 17 to 21:

Whereas by article five of the terms and conditions in the surrender from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Crown, the said Company is entitled to one-twentieth of the lands surveyed into townships in a certain portion of the territory surrendered, described and designated as the "Fertile Belt":

And whereas it is found by computation that the said one-twentieth will be exactly met, by allotting in every fifth township two whole sections of six hundred and forty acres each, and in all other townships one section and three quarters of a section each...

One twentieth of total in the "postage stamp" Province for HBC = 416, 000 acres

Section 22 of the *Dominion Lands Act* set aside land for public schools:

And whereas it is expedient to make provision in aid of education in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, therefore sections eleven and twenty-nine in each and every surveyed township throughout the extent of the Dominion Lands, shall be and are hereby set apart as an endowment for purposes of education.

Sections 23 to 28 of the *Dominion Lands Act* made provision for the British and Canadian soldiers sent to Manitoba on February 11, 1870 as the Red River Expeditionary Force.

Section 27 reads:

And whereas by order to the Governor-in-Council, dated 25 April, 1871, it is declared that, — The officers and soldiers of the 1st or Ontario and 2nd or Quebec Battalion of Rifles, then stationed in Manitoba, whether in the service or depôt companies, and not

having been dismissed therefrom, should be entitled to a free grant of land without actual residence, of one quarter section, — such grant is hereby confirmed, and the Minister of Militia and Defence is hereby authorized and required to issue the necessary warrants therefore accordingly: ...

Boundary Changes and Other Land Grants:

- East Mennonite Reserve in Manitoba on July 31, 1874 = 184,320 acres
Mennonite financial grant of \$100,000.00 established.
- New Iceland Reserve created just north of Manitoba in 1875 = 207,360 acres
- West Mennonite Reserve created in 1876 (move started in 1875) = 391,680 acres
- 1881: the boundary of Manitoba is set to 52° 50' parallel in the north (just south of Grand Rapids), west to present day Saskatchewan (the 29th range of townships), and east into present day Ontario (north of the Albany River this was east of the 90th latitude). South of this the Ontario/Manitoba boundary was still in dispute. This expanded the area of the province to 189,327 square kilometers.
- CPR land grants (alternating sections within 24 miles on either side of the railway)¹ Manitoba and NWT = 25, 000,000 acres
- CPR Financial grant = \$25,000,000.00. Additionally, land grants to the CPR were to be free from taxation for 20 years or until sold. Properties used for railway purposes were to be free of taxation forever. In Winnipeg the CPR paid no municipal property tax at all until 1954. In that year it made an agreement with the city to pay \$250,000 in lieu of taxes. In 1965 a bill was passed in the Manitoba Legislature to tax CPR property, but at a reduced assessment. The reduction was 50% until 1972, 40% until 1980, and so on until the full rate of taxes will be paid in 2005.
- Canadian Pacific Souris Branch land grant = 1,408,704 acres
- Canadian Pacific Pipestone extension to Souris Branch = 200,320 acres
- Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay Railway and Steamship Co. land grants (1884-85)
 - Beaver to Gladstone and Sifton to Mb. Border = 1,098,000 acres
Provincial boundary to Erwood Sk. & from Erwood north = 1,186,048 acres

¹ See James B. Hedges, *The Federal Railway Land Subsidy Policy of Canada*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934. Also see Robert Chodos, *The CPR: A Century of Corporate Welfare*. Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, Publishers, 1973.

- Lake Manitoba Railway and Canal Co. land grants. Gladstone to Winnipegosis = 98,000 acres
- Manitoba and South-Eastern Railway land grants. St. Boniface to US border = 680,320 acres.
- Manitoba and South-Western Colonization Railway land grant (1879) = 1,396,800 acres
- Westbourne and North-West Rail land grant (1882) = 1,501,376 acres
- Canadian Northern Railway, includes: Winnipeg Great Northern Rail Co. Lake Manitoba Rail and Canal Co., Manitoba and South-Eastern Co. = 4,001,729 acres.
- 1889 Canada (Ontario) Boundary Act sets the northwestern boundary of Ontario/Manitoba just west of Lake of the Woods, on about 95th latitude.
- Saskatchewan and Western Railway: This railway constructed only 15 miles of track in 1901, from Minnedosa to Rapid City. In return they received a land grant of: = 98,880 acres.

The grants to the Manitoba Railway companies were so large many of them had to take their land allotments in Alberta as there was no more Crown land available in Manitoba or Saskatchewan. May 15, 1912 was the date of the final extension of Manitoba's boundaries. This added 458,291 square kilometers to the province and increased the population by 6,000. The western boundary was extended up to the 60° north latitude and the eastern boundary to the point at which the 89° west longitude cut the shore of Hudson Bay.



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