

MÉTIS DEVELOPMENT AND THE CANADIAN WEST

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# Contrasting Worlds



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# Contrasting Worlds

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# Introduction

## Series Overview

Métis Development and the Canadian West is a series of five books which examine the development of the Métis culture and the role of the Métis in western Canada from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

- *Book 1: Contrasting Worlds* is an overview of the Canadian West from the 1600's to the early 1870's when many of the Métis moved from the Red River area to Saskatchewan.
- *Book 2: Changing Times* is an examination of the governing bodies and the laws which were in effect in the Canadian West between 1821 and 1875.
- *Book 3: Petitioning for Rights* is a study of the period between 1872 and 1883 which focuses on attempts by the Métis to obtain title to the lands on which they lived.
- *Book 4: Conflicting Plans* is an examination of the conflict between the Métis' attempts to gain legal ownership of their lands and the federal government's national policy and plans for a railway.
- *Book 5: Ending an Era* is an examination of the resistance battles, Riel's trial, the political situation and the immediate aftermath of the resistance.

## Series Objectives

The objectives of this series are:

- to present written, visual and primary materials in a form which is amenable to an inquiry-based approach
- to document Métis contributions to prairie settlement and the development of the West
- to challenge stereotypical images associated with the Métis by presenting information from which accurate perceptions of the historic Métis culture can be drawn
- to present the Métis perspective of the events which occurred between 1870 and 1885.

## Suggested Methods

The material in *Métis Development and the Canadian West* is designed to provide a basis for increasing the students' understanding of the Métis culture through an inquiry approach. Issues are presented and data is provided. The students are expected to resolve the issues themselves in a logical and defensible way. Their opinions should be respected and the emphasis should be on the development of their analytical skills.

A recommended reading list has been included at the back of each book. These can be used as resources for both teachers and students, particularly when researching further material on some of the questions.

## Organization of the Books

Each book contains:

- the objectives of the book
- a brief summary of the content
- a content section which incorporates a number of primary documents
- endnotes which indicate the source of the quotation used
- a vocabulary list which defines selected words from the content section **in this print**
- questions which can be used either for discussion, research or assignment purposes
- a recommended reading list.

## Objectives of

### *Book 1—Contrasting Worlds*

The objectives of this book are:

- to provide information about the events which led to the Métis migration to Saskatchewan in the early 1870's
- to expand the students' knowledge of the Métis as a distinct cultural group
- to create in students an understanding of the role played by the Métis in the development of the Canadian West.

## Summary of

### *Book 1—Contrasting Worlds*

By the eighteenth century the Métis had developed a culture that was unique from the cultures of both their paternal European and their maternal Indian ancestors. Many of the Métis settled in the Red River area where they relied on subsistence farming, freighting and buffalo hunting for their livelihood. By the 1870's the buffalo were becoming scarce and large numbers of settlers had come to the Red River area to farm. Consequently, many Métis moved to Saskatchewan to pursue their traditional lifestyle there.

# Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of the proposed changes on the system's performance. The study is organized as follows: Chapter 1 provides an overview of the system and the proposed changes. Chapter 2 describes the methodology used in the study. Chapter 3 presents the results of the study. Chapter 4 discusses the implications of the results. Chapter 5 concludes the study and provides recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 1: Overview of the System

The system under study is a complex system that has been in use for many years. It is used by a large number of users and is critical to the organization's operations. The proposed changes are intended to improve the system's performance and reduce the time and cost of operation.

The system is composed of several modules that interact with each other. The proposed changes affect the way these modules interact and the way they process data. The changes are expected to result in a more efficient and reliable system.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a combination of experimental and analytical methods. The experimental methods involve running the system with and without the proposed changes and measuring the performance. The analytical methods involve modeling the system and analyzing the results of the experiments.

The experimental methods are used to measure the system's performance under various conditions. The analytical methods are used to understand the underlying reasons for the performance differences. The results of the experiments and the analysis are used to evaluate the proposed changes and to make recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 3: Results

The results of the study show that the proposed changes have a significant positive effect on the system's performance. The system is faster and more reliable than before. The time and cost of operation are also reduced. The results are consistent across different conditions and users. The analysis shows that the improvements are due to the changes in the way the modules interact and process data.

The results of the study are presented in this chapter. The performance of the system is measured in terms of response time, throughput, and error rate. The proposed changes result in a significant improvement in all three metrics. The response time is reduced by 20%, the throughput is increased by 15%, and the error rate is reduced by 10%.

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## Chapter 4: Discussion

The results of the study have several implications. First, the proposed changes are a successful way to improve the performance of a complex system. Second, the results show that the proposed changes are a cost-effective way to improve the system's performance. Third, the results show that the proposed changes are a reliable way to improve the system's performance. The results are consistent across different conditions and users.

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# Contrasting Worlds

The history of western Canada has been extensively documented for the period between 1870 and 1885. However, the Canadian West did not simply spring to life during this time; many events, beginning as early as the 1600's, affected its development.

We can study events in history and make informed assumptions about the roles played by the people involved. History can be compared to an extended play, with the acts made up of specific moments in time. As with a play, history can be interpreted in many different ways. To understand the history of the Canadian West, we must begin by looking at the institutions and the people who shaped that history.

## The Institutions:

The institutions involved in shaping the history of the Canadian West were the Churches, fur trade companies and various governments.

The Church included both the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths. In the Canadian West the Anglican Church, which was supported by the early British colonizers, was the most predominant of the Protestant churches. The Roman Catholic Church received support from France and New France (Québec). Many members of the **Oblate** Fathers (a specific order within the Roman Catholic Church) left Québec and travelled west to teach Christianity to the inhabitants of the plains.



The fur trade, which included people from Europe who traded in furs with the Indian and Métis peoples, involved two major companies: the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. The Hudson's Bay Company, which operated under British control, was established on May 1, 1670. The North West Company, which was owned and operated by a small group of Scottish immigrants, was established in 1783. Prior to the formation of the North West Company, the Hudson's Bay Company had never been in competition with another major fur trading organization. For a little over a century it had controlled an industry from which it realized huge profits.

Government is a body of persons charged with the duty of governing a country or region. Government conducts the policy, actions and affairs of the area being governed. A number of governments affected the development of the Canadian West. The Government of Great Britain (i.e. the British Parliament) had a direct impact on the Canadian West because Canada was a British Colony. The Council of Rupert's Land and the Council of Assiniboia, which were appointed governments established by the Hudson's Bay Company, also had a direct impact on the development of western Canada. Although they held power in Rupert's Land from 1821 to 1869, they had little local or **indigenous** involvement. Their main function was to implement the policies of the Hudson's Bay Company in the region.

The formation of provisional governments directly affected the Canadian West. Under international law, a provisional government could legally be established in the absence of a permanent government. This was done occasionally in the Canadian West; for example, in 1869, Louis Riel and many of the residents of Assiniboia established a provisional government in an attempt to ensure their rights. The Government of Canada, which was established on July 1, 1867, also had a direct impact on the development of the West. Initially, this government had jurisdiction over the provinces of Québec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. However, with the sale of Rupert's Land in 1870, the Dominion of Canada assumed responsibility for the North West Territories. The Government of the United States, through policies advocating expansion throughout the North American continent, also affected the development of western Canada.

*First Roman Catholic Mission at Battleford, 1881.*



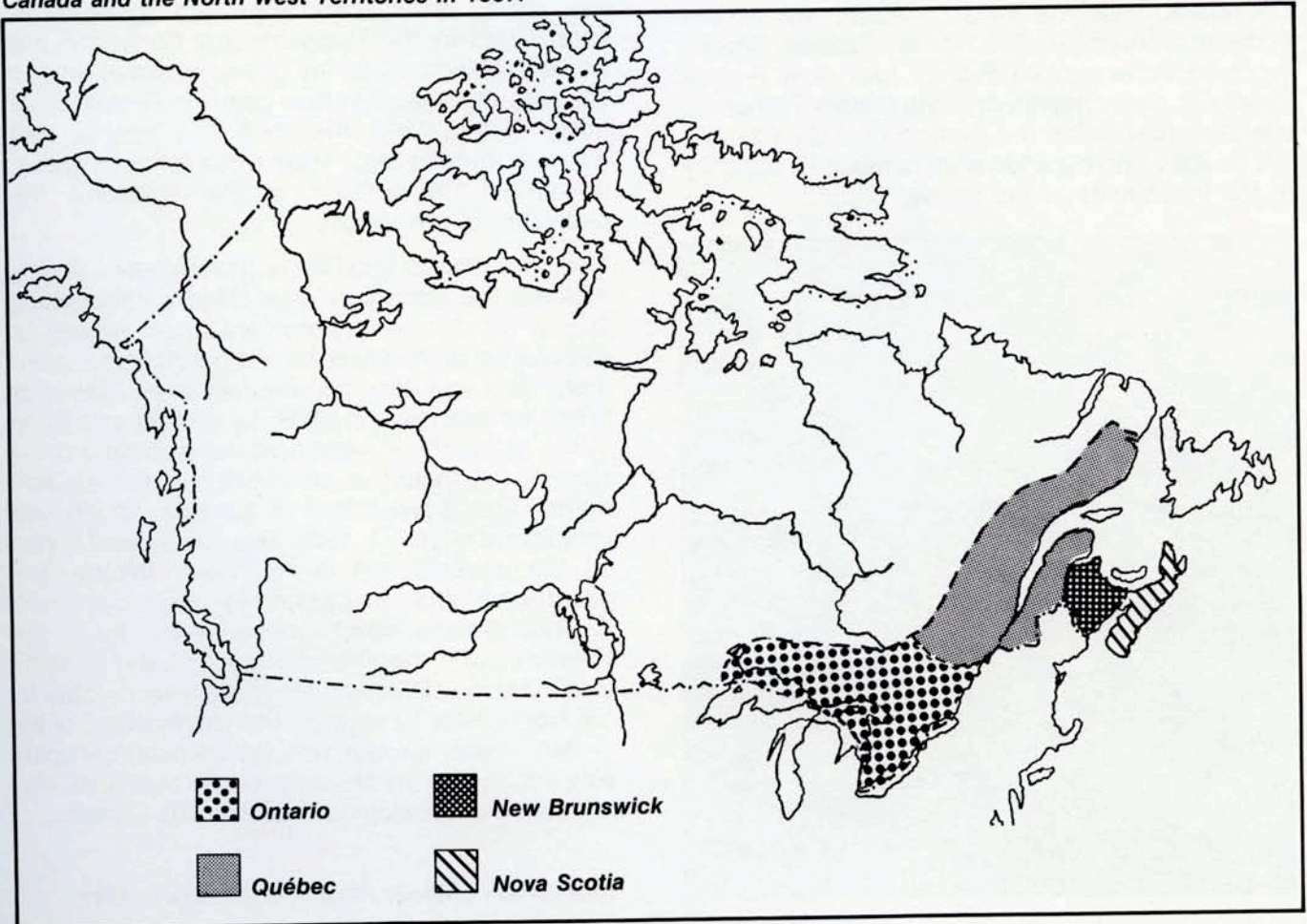
Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister (c. 1867).

## The People

The people who influenced the development of the Canadian West were the Métis, the Indian peoples and immigrants from different countries of the world. The people of the Indian nations were the original inhabitants of what came to be known as the Canadian West. There are two generally accepted versions which explain the use of the term Indian. The first states that when Christopher Columbus came to America he was so impressed by the physical and spiritual beauty of the people he met that he believed they were made from the body of God (du corpus in Deo). From the words "in Deo" comes the term Indian. The second states that when Columbus landed on the island of San Salvador in the Carribean Sea, he thought he was in India and called the inhabitants Indians. Today all indigenous peoples of North America, with the exception of the Inuit and the Métis are called Indians.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a number of European men were employed in the fur trade in the Canadian West. While in Canada they formed marriage alliances with women of the Indian nations and raised families, however most of them returned to Europe when they retired. In

Canada and the North West Territories in 1867.





the nineteenth century, immigrants came to western Canada to farm the rich soil of the prairies. Although most of these immigrants were from the British Isles and France, many came from other countries, as well.

The Métis were the children of women of the Indian nations and men who had come to Canada from Europe to work in the fur trade. Historically, the children of these marriages were referred to as either Halfbreed or Métis, depending on their paternal language. In contemporary society, however, the term Métis is preferred. In this series the term Métis is used in the text; the term Halfbreed appears only in the primary documents. (By the same token the term Dakota, which is the name preferred by these people, is used in the text, while the term Sioux remains in the primary documents.)

A distinct Métis culture emerged which incorporated various elements from their parental heritage. This included a political system, lifestyle, language, food and clothing. For example, a language which combined Cree, French and English came into use. This language, called Michif, is still used in many Métis communities today. Métis clothing became an integration of Indian and European styles. Quilted and beaded garments, made of leather but cut in European designs, became the standard dress. Scottish reels and square dances, combined with traditional dances of the Indian cultures, evolved into

a new form of dancing. One of the most popular of the new dances was the Red River Jig. From each cultural group (Cree, Saulteaux, French, Scottish, English and others) the Métis selected what pleased and suited them best and so evolved their own unique culture.



*The Red River Jig.*

*Fur traders in the North, 1870s. (E. Brown Collection B2862)*



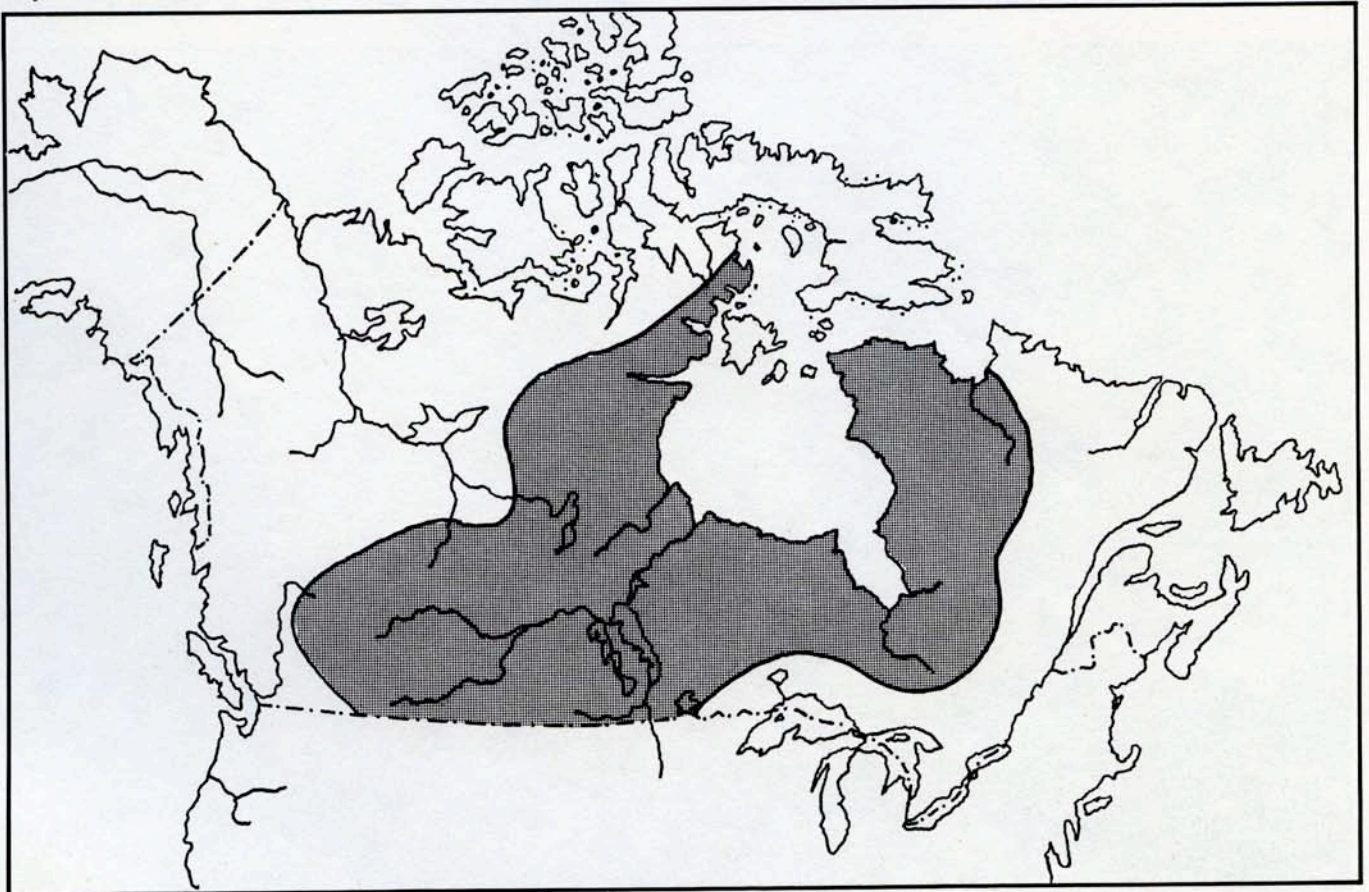
## Beginning of the Fur Trade

During the 17th century, European fashions centred around fur. The fashion industry became the primary market for beaver (which was also used in the production of felt) and other furs. Furs were plentiful in the New World so both Britain and France began devising ways of obtaining them from their North American colonies. Hence, the fur trade industry was born.

In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company was established by the *Charter of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay*. The Charter granted to the Hudson's Bay Company:

*those Seas Streights Bayes Lakes Creekes and Soundes in whatsoever Latitude they shall bee that lye within the entrance of the Streightes commonly called Hudson's Streightes together with all the Landes and Territoryes upon the cuntryes Coastes and confynes of the Seas Bayes Lakes Rivers Creekes and Soundes afore said that are actually possessed by or granted to any of our Subjectes or possessed by the Subjectes of any other Christian Prince or State.<sup>1</sup>*

**Rupert's Land, 1670.**



The charter gave the Hudson's Bay Company the trading rights to all the land which drained into Hudson's Bay. This area became known as Rupert's Land.

Rather than establish a fur trading company by government decree, as Britain had done, France used independent traders. The demand for furs in Europe created tremendous rivalry between the French and British traders. The Hudson's Bay Company established a series of forts along the shore of Hudson's Bay where they traded with the Indian peoples. In doing so, the Company guaranteed that trade goods would always be available to the Indian peoples in exchange for furs.

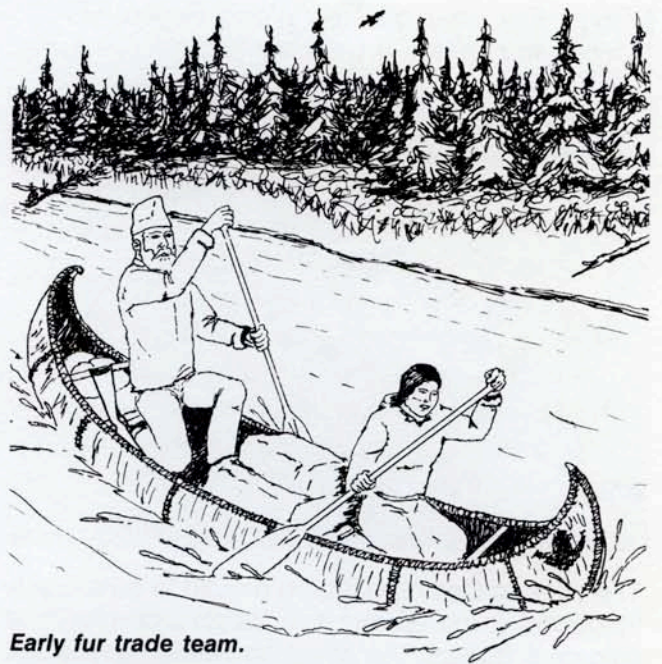
France, because of commitments elsewhere in the world, lacked both the human and financial resources to establish forts. Although years later they were able to establish posts opposite the Hudson's Bay Company forts, their immediate solution to the problem was to dispatch traders westward to trade with the Indian people. The French encouraged their traders to marry Indian women, thereby establishing good trade connections as well as gaining allies against the Hudson's Bay Company. Many Indian leaders supported these marriages because they were then guaranteed both a market for their furs and secure access to trade goods.

## Effects of the Fur Trade on the Indian Peoples

The Indian people were employed as trappers and middlemen by both France and Britain for the accumulation of wealth from their North American colonies. Furs were traded for goods such as guns, steel traps and iron pots. Because the demand for these trade goods was so great, the traders were able to inflate prices so that more and more furs were required to purchase an item. As the supply of furs in easily **accessible** areas became depleted, the Indian peoples were forced to go further afield to obtain furs. Many abandoned their hunting and gathering roles and went on extended forays in search of fur-bearing animals. This drastically altered the lifestyles and changed the social structures of the Indian peoples.

Initially, the Hudson's Bay Company did not condone intermarriage between its employees and Indian women. However, the Company soon came under a great deal of pressure to allow its officers to intermarry. "Throughout the 18th century, officers of the Bay argued with the London Committee that it was essential to keep Indian women in the posts as they performed important tasks which the British had not yet mastered."<sup>2</sup> The company finally yielded to this pressure.

Métis children were sometimes sent to eastern Canada or Europe to be educated. After receiving

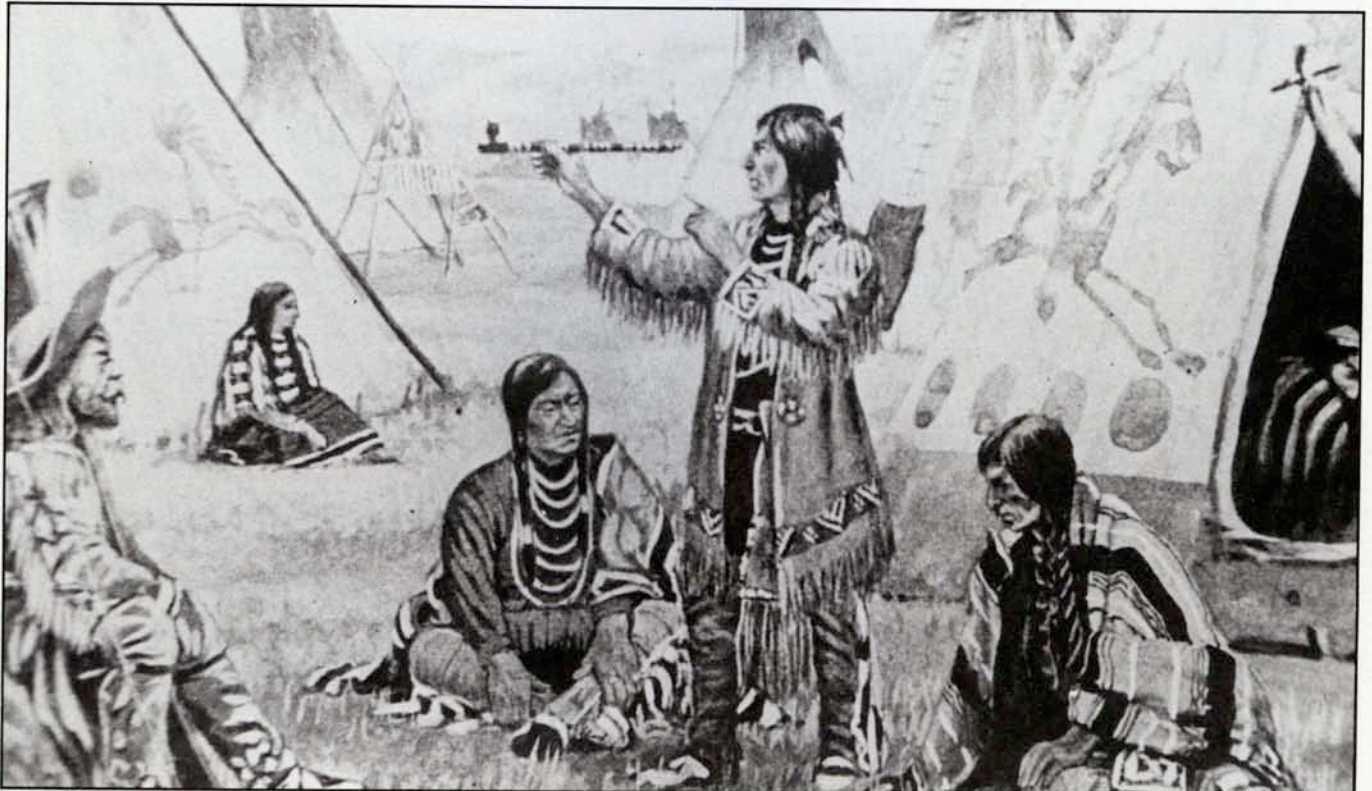


*Early fur trade team.*

a formal education, they would return to the North West to be employed in the fur trade. Their accessibility to both their fathers' and mothers' cultures made them valued employees of the fur companies. They rapidly became the middlemen who moved freely between the two cultures, trusted and respected by both.

These middlemen sometimes assisted the missionaries in spreading the teachings of the Roman

*Plains Indian men and trader.*



Catholic Church in the New World. Reverend A.G. Morice, and Oblate missionary wrote:

Those same voyageurs [the middlemen] would also, in many cases, constitute themselves some sort of lay **missioners**, telling their wife and children of the Creator and of our duties towards Him, making them pray as they themselves did, baptizing people in danger of death, giving the dead a Christian burial, etc., so many things which, quite new to the native mind, could not but make their mark and soften down the **asperities** of the Indian character: in a word, religious education in the making.<sup>3</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church proved to be a highly influential force among the Métis and, like their voyageur fathers, the Métis helped to spread the teachings of the Church. The Church encouraged settlement and, during the eighteenth century, the Oblate missionaries who came west worked long and hard to promote the establishment of permanent communities.



*Dene Trappers, 1880's.*

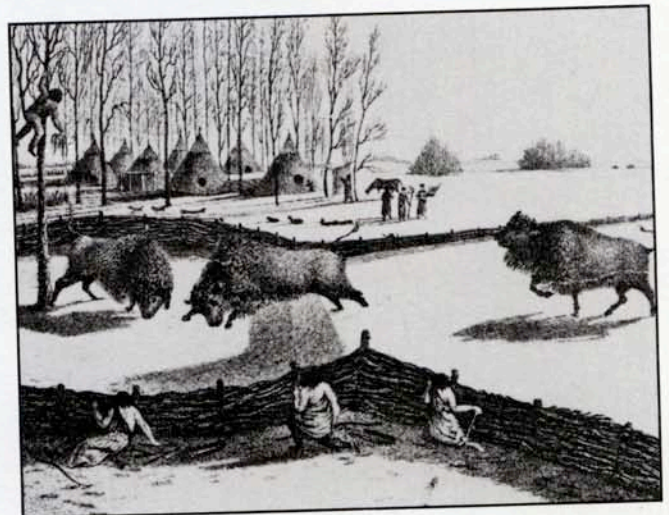
## British Rule in Canada

With the conclusion of the Seven Years War in 1763, Canada came under British rule. The conflict between the French and the British within the fur trade came to an end. The French posts were closed and competition between the fur buyers ceased. In the absence of a competitive market, the payments made to the Indian peoples and the Métis for furs decreased.

## Westward Expansion of the Fur Trade

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the fur trade underwent a dramatic change. As the animal population in the eastern fur-bearing territory had been sharply reduced, it no longer produced the quantity of furs demanded by the markets in Europe. Since the West was still rich in furs, the fur trade expanded westward. This expansion, coupled with the introduction of the horse on the prairies, caused a dramatic change in lifestyle for the Indian peoples and the Métis. The horse allowed them to follow the buffalo and to increase their hunting territory. Hunting practices changed dramatically. Once buffalo could be hunted from horseback, the hunters no longer had to rely on pounds and enclosures. Horses also replaced dogs as the means of transporting camp goods when moving. The larger carrying capacity of the horse enabled the indigenous peoples to possess more material goods than had previously been the case. The horse also made buffalo hunting easier and increased the number of animals the hunters were able to harvest.

The western fur trade period was different from the earlier eastern fur trade because the new trapping areas were far from the headquarters of the fur trading companies. The trappers and traders had to travel long distances to transport furs and they needed a food that would not spoil during the journey. Dried buffalo meat mixed with fat and wild berries became a commodity which the Indians peoples and Métis sold to the fur trading companies. Pemmican, the name by which this mixture was known, was a highly nutritious food that did not spoil and was compact and easy to carry on long trips. Buffalo hunting, which yielded the main ingredients for the easily-transported pemmican, replaced trapping as an important source of income for many Métis and Indian peoples.



*Buffalo Pound near Fort Carlton.*



*"A Surround" by A. Miller.*

## **The Formation of the North West Company**

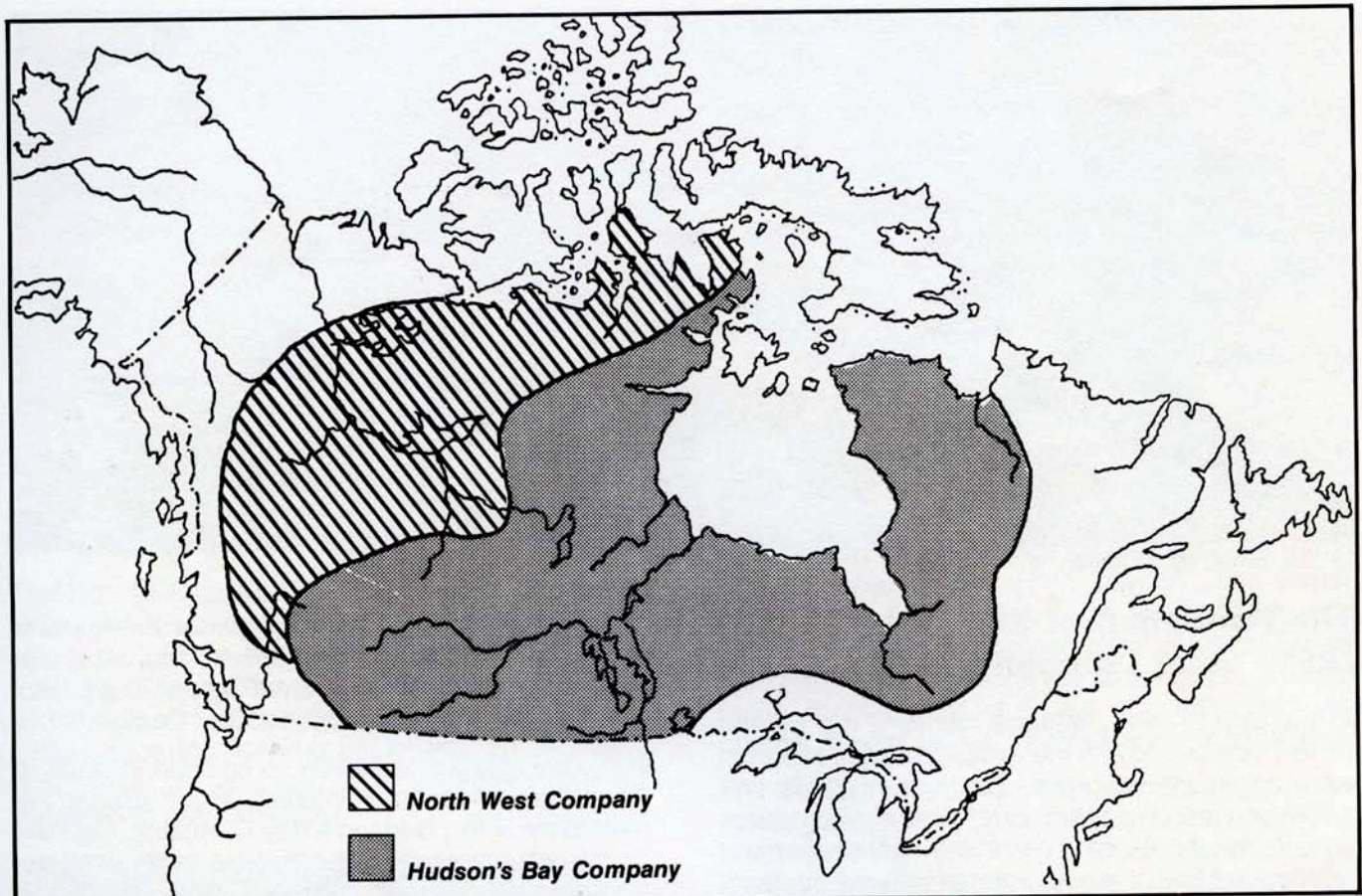
At the turn of the nineteenth century, the market for furs was strong and the merchants from Montreal were eager for business. The lure of profit and adventure inspired many independent and experienced merchants of the fur industry to expand westward. Most of these merchants were Scottish,

*Métis buffalo hunters by H. Julien, 1870's.*

but the traders they sent west were French and Métis. The traders quickly established contacts with the Indian peoples and, once again, there was competition with the Hudson's Bay Company.

The price of furs rose rapidly. In an effort to stabilize the market, protect their interests and challenge the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company, the new merchants banded together to form the North West Company. They re-established the old, abandoned





*Fur Trade Territories, early 1800's.*

French posts and trade routes that had been in existence prior to the Seven Years War. These inland posts made markets more accessible to the Cree, Ojibwa and Dene, who no longer needed to travel great distances to the Hudson's Bay region to trade their furs.

Geographically, the Hudson's Bay Company was established in Rupert's Land, which was the area surrounding Hudson's Bay. By contrast, the North West Company was primarily interested in the Athabasca Region, which is now northern Saskatchewan and northern Alberta. However, the North West Company had a serious problem. Its headquarters was situated in Montreal, approximately 6,000 kilometres from its trade area. The length and harshness of the winter allowed river travel for approximately five months a year. The North West Company's solution was to establish Fort William (now Thunder Bay) on the western shore of Lake Superior as its trade centre between Montreal and the West.

### **The Métis Migration**

The Métis people expanded westward with the fur trade, becoming hunters and traders on the plains. Many Métis became **entrepreneurs** and operated

small businesses around the area of what is now Winnipeg. The buffalo hunt supplied meat to be sold in the form of pemmican to the two rival fur trading companies. For this reason both companies supported and promoted the buffalo hunt.

### **The Selkirk Settlement**

In 1812, Lord Selkirk, a wealthy Scottish nobleman received a land grant from the Hudson's Bay Company. The land, consisting of 46,945 hectares (116,000 acres), was situated in the Red River Valley which Selkirk named the "Territory of Assiniboia". He proposed to bring Scottish immigrant farmers to the area to establish a farming community which would produce food for the fur trade and provide a labour pool for the future.

With the arrival of these settlers in 1812, the stage was set for change. Although the area no longer produced large quantities of fur, the Métis communities continued to be important as supply centres for the far-reaching North West Company. The arrival of the settlers and the establishment of the Selkirk Settlement effectively cut the North West Company's trade route in half.

## The Selkirk Settlers and the Métis

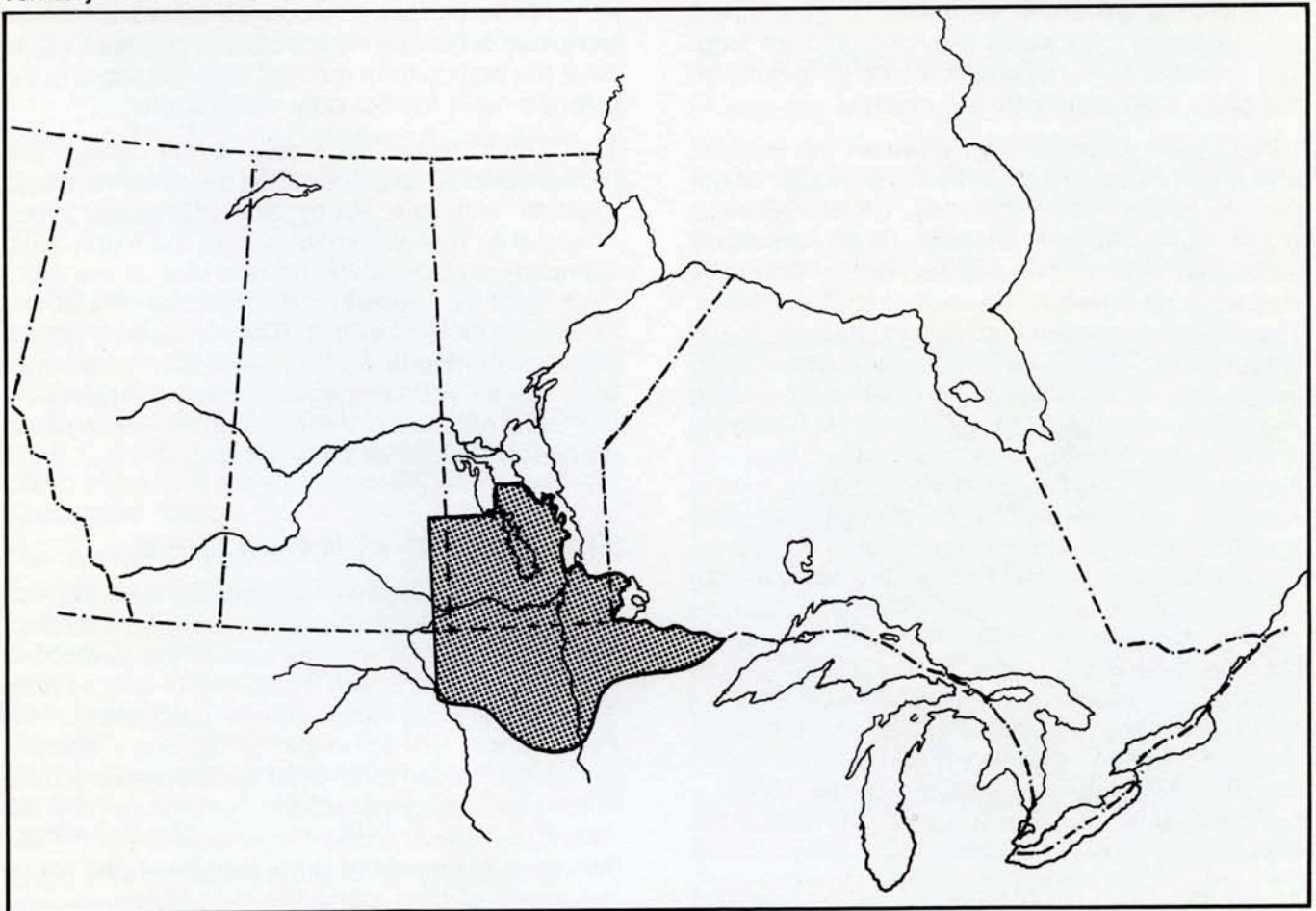
One of the worst enemies of the settlers and the Métis proved to be the weather. The winter season lasted for approximately seven months. Spring thaw and freeze-up accounted for another two months. The growing season was only three months and a strain of wheat that could mature in this length of time had yet to be developed. Crop failure resulting from early frost and grasshoppers threatened the very existence of the Red River settlers. The struggle to survive created bonds of friendship between the settlers and the Métis. The fall buffalo hunt became the major source of food for the Métis and settlers over the winter months.

Initially, the relationship between the settlers and the Métis was a friendly one; the Métis began to farm on a small scale and the Scots learned to hunt and trap. Upon the request of Lord Selkirk to the Bishop of Québec in 1818, the Roman Catholic Church was established in the West. Although a Protestant, Lord Selkirk made this request with the intention of giving his young colony every possible chance to succeed.



*Lord Selkirk, 1812.*

*Territory of Assiniboia, 1812.*



## Macdonnell's Proclamations

Despite Lord Selkirk's good intentions and the aspirations of the Selkirk Settlers to create homes and farms in the Red River Settlement, a number of situations were adversely affecting the success of the colony. Britain and the United States were at war (The War of 1812) as each sought to control land in the West. The Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company were locked in a bitter fight for control of the fur trade. From the time of their arrival in the Red River Settlement, the Selkirk Settlers struggled to survive in a climate for which they were ill equipped and in a location which was at the centre of a fur trade route.

With all these tensions operating, the increasing rivalry between the fur companies began to affect the entire area and the harmonious relationship between the Métis and the settlers gradually disintegrated. Then, in 1814, Miles Macdonnell, the Governor of Assiniboia, issued a proclamation which stated that all goods produced in the area could be used only by the colony and could not be sold to the fur trade companies.

Macdonnell's main concern was the well being of the settlers. The previous winter had been a difficult one due to the shortage of food. New settlers were scheduled to arrive and there were no guarantees the upcoming crop would provide sufficient food. The intent of the proclamation was to ensure an adequate food supply for his colony.

This sparked bitter feelings between the settlers, who would certainly benefit from the proclamation, and the North West Company, whose business would be adversely affected. Their animosity developed into a civil dispute, which ultimately created a rift between the settlers and the Métis. The settlers supported Lord Selkirk, a major shareholder in the Hudson's Bay Company, who wished to develop an agricultural community. The Métis aligned themselves with the North West Company which supported free trade. Cuthbert Grant, a Scottish Métis who had been educated in Scotland and later employed by the North West Company, emerged as a prominent figure in the dispute. Duncan Cameron and Alexander Macdonnell, both officers of the North West Company, played important roles, as well. Although Alexander Macdonnell was a cousin of Miles Macdonnell, the Governor of Assiniboia, the two were on different sides of the dispute. Miles Macdonnell was on the side of the Selkirk Settlers, who were supported by the Hudson's Bay Company; Alexander Macdonnell's allegiance was to his employer, the North West Company.

In July 1814, Governor Macdonnell issued a second



*Cuthbert Grant, Métis leader, 1816.*

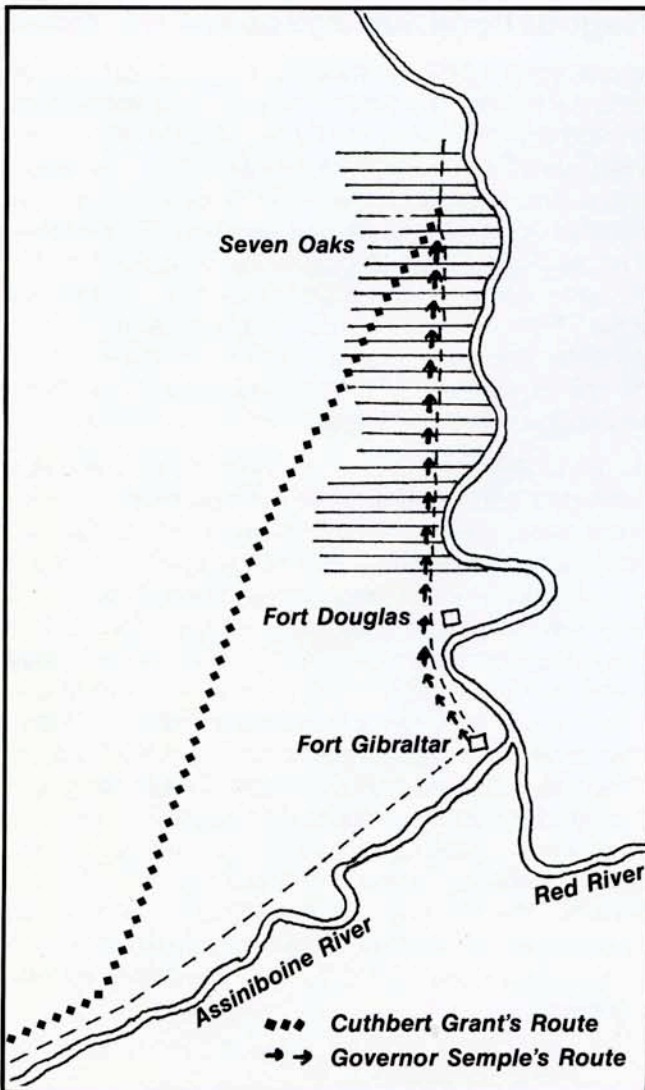
proclamation, which prohibited the use of horses to hunt the buffalo. Macdonnell feared the Métis technique of hunting the buffalo on horseback would drive the buffalo from the Red River region and the colony's main food supply would suffer.

The Métis were extremely angry about the proclamation since it threatened their livelihood and, together with the North West Company, they opposed it. This alignment placed the North West Company and the Métis on one side of the argument and the Hudson's Bay Company and the settlers on the other. To complicate matters further, some of the Hudson's Bay Company employees were Métis. These employees remained loyal to the Company and as a result, relatives were sometimes on opposite sides of the dispute.

## The Incident at Seven Oaks

In March 1816, as part of the ongoing fur trade war, the Hudson's Bay Company seized Fort Gibraltar, the North West Company's post at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, known as the Forks. The Hudson's Bay Company now had control of the Forks, under the command of Governor Semple. Semple, in order to enforce Macdonnell's proclamation restricting the export of provisions from the Assiniboia region, ordered a gunboat to patrol Lake Winnipeg at the mouth of the Red River and set up battalions of men along the river banks.



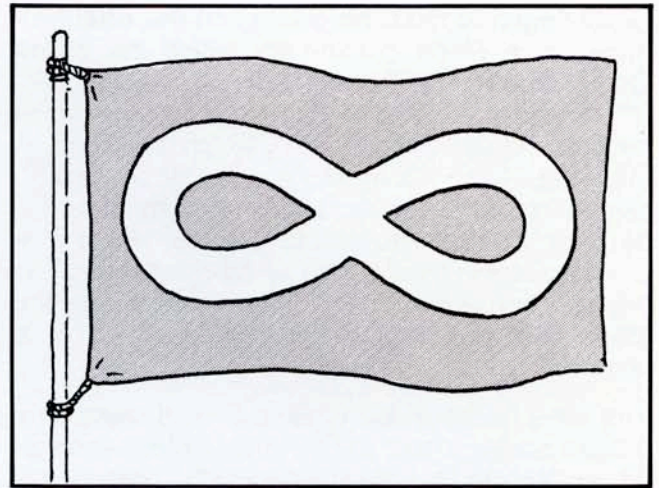


Site of the Skirmish at Seven Oaks, 1816.

In an attempt to break the blockade, Grant and his men seized the Hudson's Bay Company's supply of Qu'Appelle pemmican. The Métis then proceeded to transport the confiscated pemmican to the Red River, where they intended to sell it to the North West Company at a prearranged meeting place fifteen kilometres above the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.

The Métis planned to dock the boats before reaching the Forks and march past Fort Gibraltar and Fort Douglas. Upon hearing reports of the approaching Métis, Governor Semple sent out a force of men. His intention was to prevent the Métis from delivering their pemmican. Grant's route took him within 2.5 kilometres of the Fort. On June 19, Semple intercepted Grant's forces at a ravine known as Seven Oaks. A **skirmish** ensued, in which twenty-one settlers and one Métis were killed.

Grant later surrendered to W. B. Coltman, a royal commissioner sent on behalf of the Crown to inves-



Flag flown by the Métis at Seven Oaks, 1816.

tigate the incident. He was charged for his part in the confrontation and taken to court, but the charges were dismissed. Coltman later stated that "Grant's conduct...only seemed to him to underline the dangerous policy the North West Company had been pursuing in using the Métis for its own ends."<sup>4</sup> This statement not only reflects the close alliance between the Métis and the North West Company, but also suggests that the company viewed the Métis as a group which, if properly controlled, would provide services which would benefit the company.

## The Establishment of Grantown

In 1821 the rival fur companies merged under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company, ending years of conflict between the two. This meant that only one trading post was required where previously there had been two. As a result many Métis, including Cuthbert Grant, found themselves out of work.



Sign commemorating the merger of the fur trade companies, 1821.

Grant began to focus his energy on the establishment of a Métis community which he called Grantown. Here the Roman Catholic Church established a mission called St. Francois-Xavier. This later became the name of the town, which is located on the White Horse Plains on the outskirts of present-day Winnipeg. St. Francois-Xavier became a central base for the Roman Catholic Church, which took an active role in the daily life of the community. The priests often went on the buffalo hunts with the Métis. They also began the formal education of the children.

The lives of the Métis of Grantown developed a pattern similar to that of Pembina (a Métis community established in 1780 and situated in present day North Dakota). They hunted buffalo in the spring and fall and farmed during the summer. Grasshoppers were a major problem and repeatedly ruined the crops and gardens. An unusually heavy snowfall in the winter of 1826 caused near starvation. In the spring of 1827, the melting snow caused the Red River to flood, forcing many people to flee from their homes. After the flood waters receded, the inhabitants returned to start over.

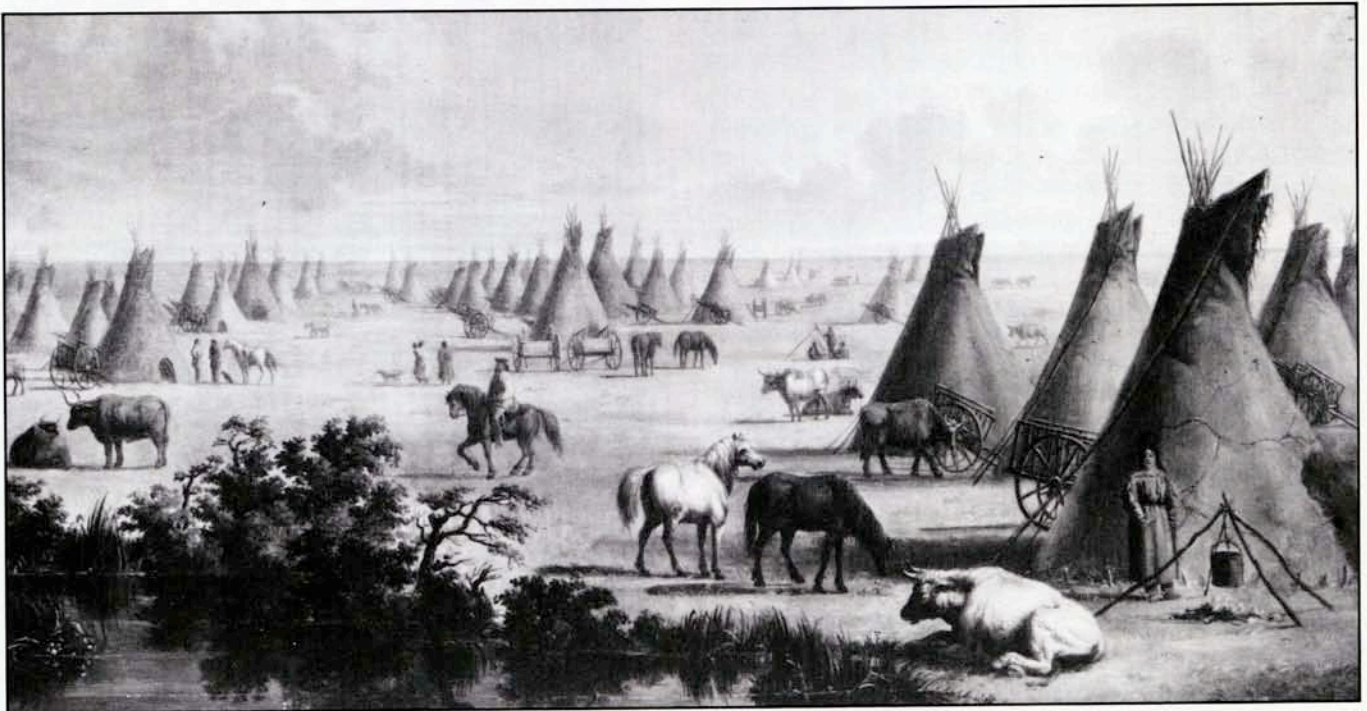
In 1828 Grant was appointed Warden of the Plains by Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company. His job entailed policing the fur trade and general business of the area. Although this position placed Grant in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, he maintained his role as leader of the Métis by general consensus. Grant was primarily concerned with the well-being of the people. Under his leadership, Grantown flourished and became important to the fur trade as a source of supplies.

## Negotiations for Peace

In the early 1840's buffalo hunting spread farther onto the plains. The Saulteaux and Cree sometimes hunted with the Métis as did the Dakota. However, the Dakota were traditional enemies of the Saulteaux and regarded the territory of what is now southwestern Manitoba and southern Saskatchewan as theirs. Dakota opposition to buffalo hunts in these areas became common and skirmishes were frequent. Lookouts, guards and scouts became necessary for the safety of the hunters' camps. Since most of the hunters were Métis, these protective roles were assumed by the Métis.

In 1844, after a skirmish with the Dakota, the Métis retaliated and killed several members of a Dakota band. After the confrontation, many of the Dakota leaders met to discuss what should be done about the situation. Winter was almost upon them and it was essential that they be prepared for it. The necessary preparations could not be made if they continued to engage in skirmishes with the Métis. The years of fighting had not been productive. Many men from both sides had been killed and patrols of scouts were constantly needed. The fighting and the need for scouts reduced the number of hunters who were available to supply the needs of their people. Seeing the wisdom of putting an end to the fighting, the Dakota took the initiative and began to negotiate for peace. They drafted a letter which they sent to the Métis by an interpreter named Langé.

*Métis buffalo hunting camp, by Paul Kane, 1840's.*



## Sioux To the Half-Breeds

White Bear's Lodge, [4th November, 1844

Friends, — We hang down our heads; our wives mourn, and our children cry.

Friends, — The pipe of peace has not been in our council for the last six days.

Friends, — We are now strangers. The whites are our enemies.

Friends, — The whites have often been in our power; but we always **conveyed** them on their journey with glad hearts, and something to eat.

Friends, — Our young men have been killed. They were good warriors: their friends cry.

Friends, — Our hearts are no longer glad. Our faces are not painted.

Friends, — You owe the **Sisitous** four loaded carts, they were our relations; the half-breeds are white men: the whites always pay well.

Friends, — The four **Yanktons** did not belong to us: but they are dead also.

Friends, — Tell us if we are to be friends or enemies? Is it to be peace or war? Till now our hands have always been white, and our hearts good.

Friends, — We are not frightened; we are yet many and strong. Our bows are good; but we love peace: we are fond of our families.

Friends, — Our hearts were not glad when we left you last; our shot pouches were light, our pipes cold; but yet we love peace. Let your answer make our wives happy, and our children smile.

Friends, — Send Langé with your message, his ears are open; he is wise.

Friends, — We smoke the pipe of peace, and send our hearts to you.

Friends, — Tell Langé to run, he will eat and rest here. He will be safe, and we will not send him off hungry, or bare-footed.

Signed by the chiefs

Wa Nen De Ne Ko Ton Money  
In Yag Money  
Etaï Wake Yon  
Pin E Hon Tane

X  
X  
X  
X

La Terre qui Brule.  
The Thunder that Rings.  
The Black Bull.  
The Sun.<sup>5</sup>

The letter proposing peace was received by Cuthbert Grant, in his capacity as leader of the Métis. He replied with a letter of his own. He agreed

with the need for peace and outlined the concerns which still needed to be addressed by the Dakota:

## Half-Breeds to the Sioux.

Grantown, 8th December, 1844.

Friends, — The messenger which you sent to us, found us all sad as yourselves, and from a similar cause: a cause which may give a momentary interruption to the pipe of peace; but should not, we hope, wholly extinguish it.

Friends—You know that for half a century or more, you and we have smoked the pipe of peace together; that during all that time, no individual in your nation could say, that the half-breeds of Red River lifted up their hands in anger against him, until the late fatal occurrence compelled them in self-defence to do so; although you well know, that year after year, your young men have killed, and, what we regard worse than death, scalped many belonging to us. Not that we were afraid to retaliate; but because we are Christians, and never indulge in revenge. And this declaration, which may not be denied, brings us more immediately to notice and to answer the several points in your message to us.

Friends, — You say your people have been killed: we believe what you say, and sincerely regret it; but at the same time, you forget to express your regret that our people were killed also: the one fact is as well known to you as the other; and they were killed first. You forget to notice, that whilst La Terre qui Brule and party were in the midst of our friendly camp, smoking the *calumet* of peace in all confidence and security, your people at that moment were treacherously murdering our friends within sight of that very camp! You forget to mention that our dead were brought into the camp, the bodies yet warm, and laid before your eyes! Till then, never did it enter into the head or the heart of a Red River half-breed to seek in revenge the blood of a Sioux.

Friends, — You state that our people have often been in your power: we acknowledge what you say; but you must likewise acknowledge, that your people have often been in our power, and we sent them off with glad hearts also. Even on the late fatal occurrence, when our dead were before your eyes, and when a hundred guns pointed with deadly aim threatened La Terre qui Brule and party with instant death, yet more were for you than against you; so you were safe; La Terre qui Brule and party were safe in the camp of the half-breeds. The brave are always generous.

Friends, — You state that when you last left us, "your shot pouches were light and your pipes cold." There is a time for everything; was it a time to show you special kindness when murdering our relations? You demanded from us four loaded carts for the four Sisitous: we never refuse paying a just debt, never consent to pay an unjust one. Let us see how far we are liable. In the first place, then, you know your people were the first aggressors. You, La Terre qui Brule, saw with your own eyes our dead, and you knew that none of your people were then killed, and we gave up all thoughts of retaliation, still clinging with fond hopes to that peace and friendship which had so long cheered our intercourse together; but the very next day after you left our camp, a party of your people were discovered rushing upon one of our hunters who happened to be a little on one side and alone; the alarm was given, when the first at hand scampered off at full speed to the rescue of their brother, and in the onset your people were killed. Four, you say, were Yanktons. The demand you make we cannot comply with, either for Sisitous or Yanktons, be the consequences what they may; because we consider it unjust. We may give a pipe of tobacco, or a load of ammunition voluntarily; but we will submit to no unjust demand.

Friends, — You put the question, "Shall we be friends or enemies, or shall there be peace or war?" We leave yourselves to answer the question. They who would have friends must show themselves friendly. We have violated no faith, we have broken no peace. We will break none. We will not go to find you to do you harm. We will always respect the laws of humanity. But we will never forget the first law of nature: we will defend ourselves, should you be numerous as the stars, and powerful as the sun. You say you are not frightened: we know you are a brave and generous people; but there are bad people among you.

Friends, — We are fond of you, because you have often showed yourselves generous and kind to the whites: we are fond of you from a long and friendly intercourse, and from habits of intimacy. To sum up all in a few words, we are for peace, peace is our motto; but on the contrary, if you are for war, and you raise the tomahawk in anger, we warn you not to approach our camp either by day or night, or you will be answerable for the consequences.

Friends, — You have now our answer; we hope you will take the same view of things, and come to the same conclusion we have done. Langé will lay this before the great chiefs; may your answer be the sacred pipe of peace. Put your decision on white man's paper. And may that peace and friendship, which has so long knit our hearts together heretofore, still continue to do so hereafter.

To Wa Nen De Ne Ko Ton Money.

In Yag Money.

Etai Wake Yon.

Pin E Hon Tane.<sup>6</sup>

(signed) Cuthbert Grant,

Chief of the half-breeds,  
and Warden of the Plains

Upon receiving the letter from Grant, the Dakota leaders assembled to discuss their response to it. A consensus was reached and a final proposal for

peace was drafted. The nature of the peace was clearly defined in their letter to the Métis:

## Sioux to the Half-Breeds

To Cuthbert Grant, Chief of all the half-breeds, and Warden of the Plains

White Bear's Lodge, [2th Feb. 1845

Friends, — Langé is here, and your message is now spread before us in council. Ne-tai-ope called for the pipe; but Wa-nen-de-ne-ko-ton-money said no: all the men were then silent; but the women set up a noisy howl out-doors. Nothing was done till they got quiet. The council then broke up. Next day it was the same. The third day the council received your message as one of peace. We now send you our answer. Langé promises to run.

Friends, — I, the afflicted father of one of the young men killed by you, wish that he who killed my son should be my son in his stead. He had two feathers in his head.

Ne Tai Ope.

Friends, — Among the young men killed by you, I have a nephew. He who killed him I wish to be my nephew. He was the smallest of all the unfortunates.

Friends, — You killed my son, he was brave, San-be-ge-ai-too tan. He who pointed the gun at him, I wish to be my son. He had a feathered wand in his hand. I send it by Langé to my adopted son.

Tah Wah Chan Can.

Friends, — I wish the brave who killed my brother, should be my brother. He had a gun and many feathers in his head. He was young.

Hai To Ke Yan

Friends, — I am old and bowed down with sorrow. You killed my brother-in-law. He was braver than the bear. Had three wounds, and a scar on the face. Whoever killed him, I wish him to be my brother-in-law for ever. He was bareheaded. Hair painted red. Many bells and beads on his leggings. He was tall and strong.

Tah Tan Yon Wah Ma De Yon

Friends, — My cousin never returned. He is dead. Whoever deprived me of his friendship, I wish him to be my friend and cousin. He had been wounded before, and had a crooked hand. His feathers were red. He had garnished shoes.

Wah Ma De Oke Yon.

Friends, — You killed my father last summer. I wish him who made me fatherless, should be my father. He was a chief, a Sisitou warrior, had a gun and a bow, had been scalped young. His feathers reached the ground. Whoever will wear those proud feathers, I will give him a horse. I will be proud of him.

Friends, — You killed my uncle, Thon-gan-en-de-na-ge. I am sad. The man who was so brave, I wish to be my uncle. He was a Yankton. My face is always painted black. He had on cloth and leather leggings, and one feather.

Kan Tan Kee.

Signed by the chiefs.

Wa Nen De Ne Ko Ton Money  
In Yag Money  
Etaï Wake Yon  
Pin E Hon Tane

X  
X  
X  
X

La Terre qui Brule.  
The Thunder that Rings.  
The Black Bull.  
The Sun<sup>7</sup>

These letters restored peace and friendship between the Dakota and the Métis and became the basis for a peace between the Dakota and their traditional enemies, the Saulteaux. As a result of the peace, the Métis were able to move freely across the plains and to develop a strong trading network.

## Free Trade

Buffalo hunting expanded across the prairies in the 1840's. The Métis established trade routes throughout western Canada, with extensions into the United States where good prices for hides and meats could be obtained. Governor Macdonnell's proclamation of 1814, which restricted trade to the Selkirk Settlement, was ignored by the Métis traders. In his capacity as Warden of the Plains, Grant attempted to enforce the proclamation but, in so doing, he lost credibility as leader of the Métis.

In 1849, Guillaume Sayer and three other Métis were arrested for illegally trading in furs. At their trial, three hundred Métis, under the leadership of Louis Riel, Sr., surrounded the courtroom and demanded the release of the four men. Although the traders were found guilty, they were released without punishment. When the crowd of Métis heard the verdict, they interpreted it as being an acquittal and promptly drew the conclusion that no one would be penalized for trading in furs. The Sayer trial became much more significant than the trial of four men. This case signified the trial of Hudson's Bay Company rule and also, in some respects, the trial of Cuthbert Grant. The Hudson's Bay Company trade monopoly had been broken once again and gave way to free trade.

## A Final Peace

Peace on the prairies was disturbed again when Métis buffalo hunters and the Dakota fought at the Grand Coteau in 1851. Two parties of Métis buffalo hunters were hunting buffalo south of the Red River Settlement. The 1300 St. Boniface and Pembina hunters comprised the main party; the St. Francois-Xavier hunters, who numbered less than 100, hunted independently of the main party but planned "mutual support in the event of attack by Sioux. It was known that the Sioux were planning to attack the hunt and it was important therefore to give them no advantage."<sup>8</sup>

Several days later, five Métis scouts from the St. Francois-Xavier party sighted a large Dakota encampment. After warning the hunters, the scouts rode to the Dakota camp where they were taken prisoner. Two managed to escape and were able to warn the hunting party to prepare for attack. They formed a barricade of carts to fence in the oxen and

horses. Throughout the night they dug rifle pits beneath the carts and well in front of the barricades.

A priest, Reverend LaFleche, accompanied the St. Francois-Xavier Métis on their hunt. The following morning he celebrated Mass with them. Shortly after, the Dakota attacked.

Reverend LaFleche did not take part in the battle but his presence and encouragement affected the outcome. During the battle he was situated in a cart located in the centre of camp and "A chief was heard to cry 'the French have a Manitou with them.'"<sup>9</sup> The battle ended with a Dakota chief riding into the Métis encampment and announcing that never again would the Dakota fight the Métis.

After the fighting was over the Métis had lost only one scout. In addition, they lost twelve horses and four oxen, but this was not enough to prevent them from continuing the hunt. It was later reported that the Dakota had lost eighty men in all.<sup>10</sup>

## Plans for the West

By 1859, the Red River Settlement acquired its first newspaper, *The NorWester*. The editor of the paper, Dr. Schultz, was a member of the Canada First movement, a group whose members strongly supported the acquisition of the North West by Canada. *The NorWester* became a valuable asset to the Canada First movement:

*The principal weapon of the Canadian Party was the press...The avowed purpose of the paper was to attack the Company rule and to further the cause of Canadian annexation. At first the tone of the paper was relatively mild, but from 1865, when it became the sole property of Dr. Schultz, it became more fiery and abusive.*<sup>11</sup>

Besides promoting annexation and attacking Hudson's Bay Company rule, Schultz frequently published demeaning remarks about the indigenous peoples of the North West. Comments such as, "The **indolent** and the careless, like the native tribes of the country, will fall back before the march of superior intelligence"<sup>12</sup>, caused resentment and concern among the Métis and Indian peoples of the Red River area. These articles increased the apprehension of the local residents, who feared that their rights would be neglected if large numbers of newcomers, who quite possibly shared Schultz's viewpoints, immigrated to the area.

In addition to their apprehension about increased settlement in the Red River area, the inhabitants

of the settlement were concerned that the United States planned to annex the North West Territories as another state:

The American Revolution introduced nationalism to North America. Originally it was merely a defensive nationalism. The main problems for the new nation were, first, to establish the best possible geographic boundaries between British and American territories and, second, to seize as many as possible of those commercial advantages which the American colonies had enjoyed as colonial members of the first British Empire....The establishment of the 49th parallel as the boundary through the Oregon territory to the Pacific Coast in 1846 represented a partial American defeat, but a defeat regarded by many as purely temporary. Simultaneously, American publicists rallied to the banner of **Manifest Destiny**, the concept defined in the years of its early effectiveness as the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us [from a statement by John L. O'Sullivan, 1845]. By 1850 the early defensive nationalism of the United States had given way to an aggressive economic and political philosophy which fully sanctioned territorial **aggrandizement** within continental limits.<sup>13</sup>



Dr. John Schultz, editor of the *Nor'Wester*, 1850's.

Under the *British North America Act* Canadian Confederation on July 1, 1867 established the provinces of Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In the same year, the Dominion of Canada began negotiations to purchase the North West Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company. These negotiations, which were undertaken without consulting the inhabitants of the North West, caused further concern and controversy in the Red River Settlement.

In the fall of 1867, two years before the transaction was concluded, the Canadian Government sent J. A. Snow and a group of surveyors to the Red River area. Their instructions were to build a road from the Red River Settlement to Lake of the Woods, despite the fact that the government was not legally in a position to undertake either surveying or construction until the purchase of the territory had been finalized.

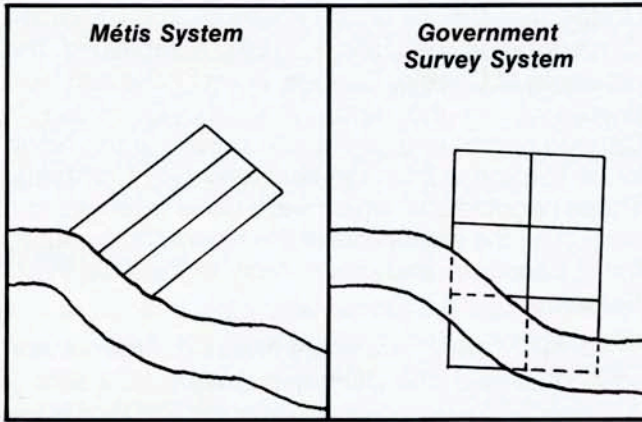
Many of the Métis and settlers were employed to do the construction work. However, wages were paid not in money, but in provisions which could be obtained only from Dr. Schultz, who owned a store as well as the newspaper. The prices of the provisions increased until they were higher than any others around. Resentment over the prices and the method of payment grew, especially among the Métis who already disliked Schultz for his newspaper articles.

## The Sale of Rupert's Land

In 1869 the Government of Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company and Great Britain signed an agreement whereby Rupert's Land was sold to the Dominion of Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company received one twentieth of all the land in the fertile prairie belt and Canada assumed responsibility for the West.

Throughout the negotiations, the Métis, Indians and settlers of the Red River area were not consulted about the changes which were taking place.

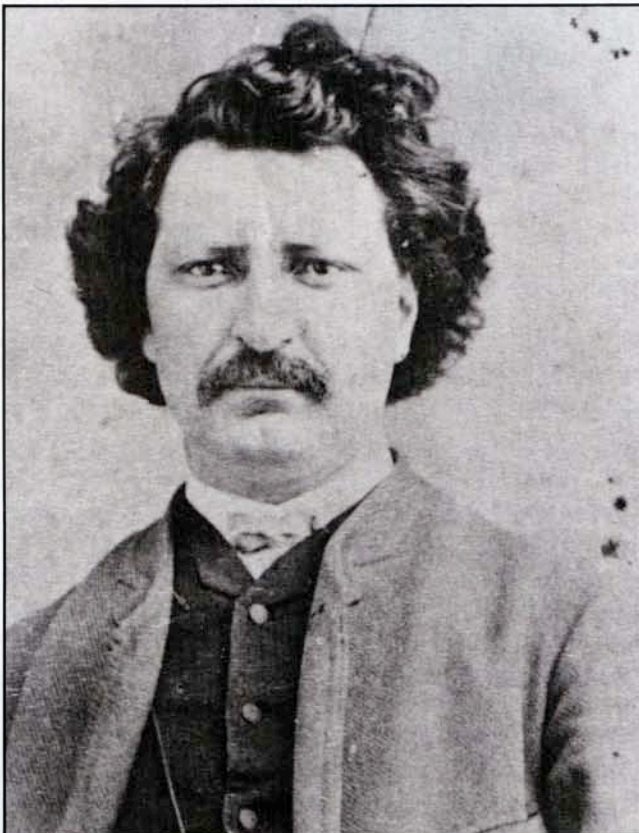
There were two issues which led these people to rally under the leadership of Louis Riel, Jr. The first was the land ownership question. Not only was land title in doubt, but the government's system of dividing the land was unsatisfactory to most people. Land surveyors had moved into the area before the transfer and it was at this time that the Red River inhabitants learned of the impending changes to their status. The surveyors used an American system of land division that divided land into 1.61 kilometre (one mile) squares. The Métis had used a chain system of land division, dividing the land into strips which were 0.4 km wide and 3.22 km long (10 chains wide and 2 miles long). With a new



*Differing systems of land division.*

system of land division being used and no negotiations about land title taking place, the Red River residents were afraid of losing their land altogether.

The second issue centred around the new economic and political plans for the region. The economic concerns focused on the possibility that there would be a large influx of settlers, which would eventually increase the price of land and goods. The political concerns focused on the fear that their language, religious and cultural rights would not be guaranteed following a union with an English-speaking majority. All of the Red River inhabitants expected changes, but they wanted to exercise a degree of control over them.



*Louis Riel, Métis leader, 1873.*

## List of Rights

On November 16, 1869, English-speaking and French-speaking delegates from the Red River Settlement met to formulate a plan for negotiating with the federal government. Louis Riel proposed that they form a provisional government to ensure that their rights would be guaranteed. As the two groups could not agree on the proposal, the meeting was adjourned to allow time for all to consider the situation. They met again on December 1, 1869. This time the meeting was adjourned in order to prepare a List of Rights. However, although the English-speaking settlers supported the List of Rights, they would not agree to Riel's proposal of delaying the entry of the governor into the territory until the rights had been guaranteed.

## List of Rights

1. That the Territories, heretofore known as Rupert's Land and North-West, shall not enter into Confederation of the Dominion, except as a Province, to be styled and known as the Province of Assiniboia, and with all the rights and privileges common to the different Provinces of the Dominion.
2. That we have two Representatives in the Senate, and four in the House of Commons of Canada, until such time as an increase of population entitles the Province to a greater representation.
3. That the Province of Assiniboia shall not be held liable, at any time, for any portion of the public debt of the Dominion, contracted before the date the said Province shall have entered the Confederation unless the said Province shall have first received from the Dominion the full amount for which the said province is to be held liable.
4. That the sum of eighty thousand dollars be paid annually by the Dominion Government, to the Local Legislature of this Province.
5. That all properties, rights and privileges enjoyed by the people of this Province, up to the date of our entering into the Confederation, be respected, and that the arrangement and confirmation of all customs, usages and privileges be left exclusively to the Local Legislature.
6. That during the term of five years the Province of Assiniboia shall not be subjected to any direct taxation, except such as may be imposed by the Local Legislature for municipal or local purposes.



7. That a sum of money, equal to eighty cents per head of the population of this Province, be paid annually by the Canadian Government to the Local Legislature of the said Province, until such time as the said population shall have increased to six hundred thousand.
8. That the Local Legislature shall have the right to determine the qualifications of members to represent this Province in the Parliament of Canada and the Local Legislature.
9. That in this Province, with the exception of uncivilized and unsettled Indians, every male native citizen who has attained the age of twenty-one years; and every foreigner, being a British subject, who has attained the same, and has resided three years in the Province, and is a householder; and every foreigner other than a British subject, who has resided here during the same period, being a householder, and having taken the oath of allegiance, shall be entitled to vote at the election of members for the Local Legislature and for the Canadian Parliament. It being understood that this Article be subject to **amendment**, exclusively by the Local Legislature.
10. That the bargain of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the respect to the transfer of the Government of this country to the Dominion of Canada, be annulled so far as it interferes with the rights of the people of Assiniboia, and so far as it would affect our future relations with Canada.
11. That the Local Legislature of the Province of Assiniboia shall have full control over all the public lands of the Province, and the right to annul all acts or arrangements made or entered into with reference to the public lands of Rupert's Land and the North-West, now called the Province of Assiniboia.
12. That the Government of Canada appoint a Commissioner of Engineers to explore the various districts of the Province of Assiniboia, and to lay before the Local Legislature a report of the mineral wealth of the Province, within five years from the date of our entering into Confederation.
13. That treaties be concluded between Canada and the different Indian tribes of the Province of Assiniboia, by and with the advice and co-operation of the Local Legislature of this Province.
14. That an uninterrupted steam communication from

Lake Superior to Fort Garry be guaranteed to be completed within the space of five years.

15. That all public buildings, bridges, roads, and other public works be at the cost of the Dominion Treasury.
16. That the English and French languages be common in the Legislature, and in the Courts, and that all public documents as well as Acts of Legislature, be published in both languages.
17. That whereas the French and English-speaking people of Assiniboia are so equally divided as to numbers yet so united in their interests, and so connected by commerce, family connections, and other political and social relations, that it has happily been found impossible to bring them into hostile collision, although repeated attempts have been made by designing strangers for reasons known to themselves to bring about so ruinous and disastrous an event.

And whereas, after all the troubles and apparent dissensions of the past, the result of misunderstanding among themselves they have, as soon as the evil agencies referred to above were removed, become as united and friendly as ever; therefore, as a means to strengthen this union and friendly feeling among all classes we deem it **expedient** and advisable:

That the Lieutenant-Governor who may be appointed for the Province of Assiniboia should be familiar with both the French and English languages.

18. That the Judges of the Superior-Court speak the English and French languages.
19. That all debts contracted by the Provisional Government of the Territory of the North-West, now called Assiniboia, in consequence of the illegal and inconsiderate measures adopted by Canadian officials to bring about a civil war in our midst, be paid out of the Dominion Treasury, and that none of the members of the Provisional Government or any of those acting under them be in any way held liable or responsible with regard to the movement, or any of the actions which led to the present negotiations.
20. That in view of the present exceptional position of Assiniboia duties upon goods imported into the Province shall, except in the case of spirituous liquors, continue as at present for at least three

years from the date of our entering the Confederation, and for such further time as may elapse, until there be uninterrupted railroad communication between Winnipeg and St. Paul, and also steam communication between Winnipeg and Lake Superior.<sup>14</sup>

## Provisional Government

On December 8, 1869, Louis Riel, supported only by the French-speaking Métis, formed a provisional government. Under Louis Riel, the Métis negotiated with Ottawa and the Province of Manitoba was created as a result. The Métis, in addition to being guaranteed preservation of their religious and language rights, were given **scrip** as a promise of land title for the future. The provisional government stepped down and the West became a part of Canada.

However, the creation of the Province of Manitoba and the issuing of scrip did not solve the Métis' problems. The federal government sent a large peace-keeping force to the area. Even before the troops arrived, Riel was warned by James G. Stewart, an English speaking settler:

*For the love of God, save yourself. The troops are only two miles from here and the soldiers speak of nothing but massacring you and your companions.<sup>15</sup>*

Much of the ill feeling directed at Riel and his companions arose from the execution of Thomas Scott. Scott, a member of the Canada First Movement, had been tried, convicted and executed for treason by Riel's provisional government. Lieutenant Governor Adams Archibald later reported:

*With some (I cannot say how many) of the volunteers who went up, a desire to avenge the murder of Scott was one of the inducements to enlist. Some of them openly stated that they had taken a vow before leaving home to pay off all scores by shooting down any Frenchman that was in any way connected with that event.<sup>16</sup>*

A reward of \$5,000 for the capture of Louis Riel was posted by an Ontario-based group of which Thomas Scott's brother was a member. A similar reward was offered for the capture of Ambroise Lepine, Riel's adjutant-general of the provisional government and the man who presided over the execution of Thomas

*Provisional government of 1869-70.*





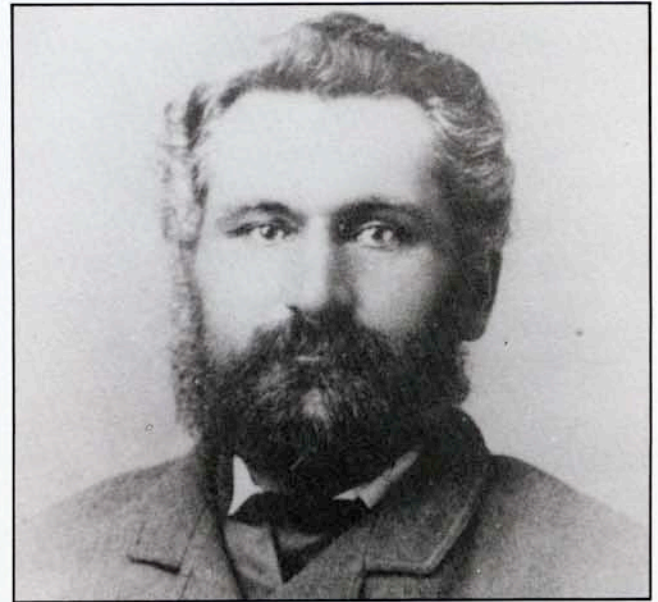
Thomas Scott, 1869.

Scott. Riel fled to the United States to avoid persecution. Lepine was arrested in the fall of 1873, tried on October 13, 1874 and sentenced to death. The case was later reviewed and the death sentence was commuted to a two-year jail term and permanent loss of civil rights.

Although it appeared that the land issue was about to be resolved, this was not to be the case. The federal government did not begin to issue scrip until 1873. By 1875, three different methods had been introduced, each new one cancelling the allotments previously issued. Meanwhile, more and more Métis returned from the buffalo hunts to find newcomers on their lands. When challenged, the newcomers refused to move. Sealey and Lussier elaborate on this mismanagement of land allotment:

Certain townships were set aside or reserved for Métis settlement. Not until 1873 did the government begin to allot the land. At that point, the Canadian government, in an example of prime idiocy, decided that adults and heads of families were not eligible — only the children who could prove residence in Manitoba at the time of transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada on July 15th, 1870 were to receive land, at the rate of one hundred ninety acres per capita.

In 1874, the rules were changed and the heads of family were to be given land also, to the extent of one hundred sixty acres or a money scrip to the value of \$160 per adult. As many children were absent on buffalo hunts on July 15, 1870, a new census of the Métis was to be taken. This showed 5,088 persons



Ambroise Lepine, Riel's Adjutant-General, 1869-70.

eligible for land but admittedly incomplete — especially as the census of 1870 had registered 9,840 mixed-bloods. The government decided that the newly revised grants would be two hundred forty acres per person and all previous allotments were cancelled in order to start again under the new regulation. By 1879, all the land apparently had been allocated but Métis were still coming off the plains and out of the trapping areas to register.

Confusion reigned supreme. One year a Métis had land, but the next year it was taken away for redistribution. White immigration was pouring into the province and often, when a Métis went to claim the land granted to him, he would discover an immigrant family firmly in possession.<sup>17</sup>

## The Métis In Saskatchewan

Even before the government attempted to resolve the scrip issue, many of the Métis had decided to leave Manitoba. In addition to losing their land, many of them were harassed by the Canadian troops and newcomers who had come to the Red River. Lieutenant Governor Archibald, in a letter to John A. Macdonald dated October 9, 1871, wrote:

You cannot conceive the worry and anxiety I have had for the last few days....on the one side the feelings of the French Halfbreeds were so excited not so much I believe by the dread about their land allotment as

by the persistent ill-usage of such of them as have ventured from time to time into Winnipeg from the disbanded volunteers and new comers who fill that town. Many of them actually have been so beaten and outraged that they feel as if they were living in a state of slavery. They say that the bitter hatred of these people is a yoke so intolerable that they would gladly escape it by any sacrifice.<sup>18</sup>

Loading their belongings onto Red River carts, the Métis travelled west. Many settled permanently in Saskatchewan, where they hoped to recreate their former lifestyle. In December 1871, these people met to decide whether or not to establish a permanent community at their winter camp on the Saskatchewan River. The document which follows is an excerpt from the **transcript** of that meeting:

31 Dec., 1871

Condensed report of a meeting of the Métis Winterers at the Mission of St. Laurence on the South Saskatchewan near Carlton.

The following Gentlemen were voted "**nem con**" as follows:

Mr. Lawrence Clarke

H.B.C.

Chairman

Mr. Joseph Emilin

Vice Chairman

Reverend Father André

Secretary

The Chairman opened the meeting by expressing his thanks for the honor conferred on him by inviting him to preside at their assembly. He felt this the more sensible, as it proved the friendly feeling existing between the Métis population of the Saskatchewan and that Company, of which he was, there, the representative. The honor they had done him he was proud to say was not an isolated instance of their respect and esteem for the Company's officers. At the large and important Métis Settlement of St. Albert near Edmonton, Mr. Chief Factor Christie had been chosen by the people there, as their president, to counsel and advise, with a Committee representing the whole population of the settlement, to form a code of Laws for the self government of the Colony. The long and intimate intercourse that gentleman has had with the Métis population of St. Albert and St. Anns, and the trust and confidence they repose in him, is a guarantee that the labors of the Committee under his presidency will not be barren of good results. The Chairman would further advise the meeting that whatever steps they took to form themselves into a permanent Colony, they would have the best wishes and sympathies of the Chief Officer of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Country Mr. Donald A. Smith. That gentlemen [sic] enlarged views for the future prosecution of our trade in these vast territories, will give his hearty **assent** to any measure which shall have for their object the fostering and development of the resources of the Country, the opening out new and extended commercial intercourse and business relationships with all the inhabitants present and future, but more especially with the Métis Hunters of the great prairie Country.

The Chairman then proceeded to call their attention to the objects for which they had met. Customary at a meeting of this kind, the duties of the Chairman were simply to place the Resolutions of any member before the assembly, and if carried have them recorded but as he had been requested to speak on the matter before them he would do his best to meet their wishes. The object for which they were then gathered was of vital importance, important for themselves and families and very much more important for their posterity. They had met to decide whether they would continue to lead the lives of semi-savages without any fixed Residence, but like the Indians of the prairies change their habitations and abodes from year to year, to follow the eccentric [sic] wanderings of the Buffalo. Content to eke out a precarious living from the muzzle of the Gun. Content to isolate themselves from all the benefits to be derived from a civilized community, to cut themselves off from all the duties and **consolations** of their Religion and debar their children from receiving that education, without which they could never hope to rise in the world but must remain forever the slaves and **fielots** of their more

intelligent fellow citizens and he would tell them, that should such be their decision that they were proclaiming their own national and political demise. The Country is even now changing and in a few years will be peopled by hordes of energetic industrious men from other Countries, who will tread out with the plough and **mattoe** [sic], that trivial resource on which they built their hopes. They knew, as well, if not better than himself, that the Buffalo are fast decreasing and will be completely destroyed before another generation passed away. What then have their children to look forward to. He would tell them, **abject** poverty, deep misery and ultimate extermination. Follow then your present course of life for a few years longer, and it will not require much foresight to predict your destinies, you will be found scattered far and wide over the land eeking out a miserable existence from the waters of some Lake or River, or begging from your more industrious neighbours that **pittance** which is ever grudgingly bestowed on the unthrifty and indolent. Their destinies were in their own hands, and as they this day would decide, so would they in the future be, either a happy or miserable people. He, the Chairman, did not ask them to, at once, radically change their mode of life. It would be folly to require it. He only asked them now, before the best sections of the Country are taken up by the strangers to take up their claims, to fix themselves thereon permanently, to abandon their wanderings, and settle down into plodding steady citizens. They had three reasons for making a **remunerative** livelihood, one or both failing they would have the other to fall back upon. The prairie, the farm, the Freighting. He would ask them then in the names of their children whose future welfare they must have all at heart, to carry out the purpose for which they had assembled perseveringly. Found your Colony erect your Churches and Schools, and have your children trained and educated to labor intelligently, that they may carry your names down to posterity without disgrace or reproach....

Proposed by Mr. Alexander Emilin

Seconded by Mr. Jean Dummond Junior

Resolved: That a Committee of ten chosen from this assembly, under the leadership of our Reverend and venerated Secretary, shall be and are hereby empowered, as early in spring as possible to examine and choose and allot a claim near to Carlton for the proposed French Métis Colony, and that the present assembly will accept of the said Committee's decision for the location of said claim as final. That the following members are hereby elected members of said Committee, namely.

Reverend Father André Secretary

Jean Dummond dit Chakaska

Philip Gardupue

Mr. Alexander Emilin

Isidore Dummond dit Ecapoo

Joseph Paranteau Senior

Jean Dummond Junior

Joseph Emilin

Louison Battoche Senior<sup>19</sup>

In the following letter to Donald A. Smith, Lawrence Clarke outlined the benefits for the Métis and for the Hudson's Bay Company which would result from the meeting:

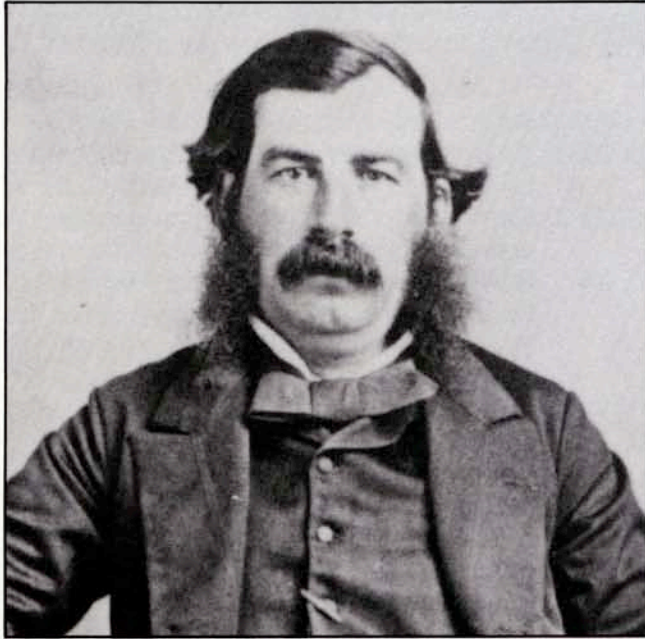
15 Jan., 1872

Lawrence Clarke, Carlton House to Donald A. Smith, Chief Commissioner, Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Garry.

I have to report for your information that by a pressing invitation on the 31st. **ultimo**, I presided at a meeting of the french (sic) Métis population wintering in the South Saskatchewan River; at which which meeting it was resolved by all present, that in the interests of themselves and families, it was necessary, that they should abandon their wandering habits, and fix themselves at or near Carlton, as a permanent Colony. These are scattered in small hamlets through the plain country of the lower Saskatchewan about two hundred and fifty heads of families, who have decided to unite and form themselves into one grand Settlement. Ten of the most respected of their people have been chosen as a Committee to, early in spring, examine and fix upon the site for the new plantation; which will immediately thereafter be built upon by them. This Colony once started will rapidly become strong and influential. The founders are far from being poor men, they are rich in horses

and have all, more or less money at their disposal. The decision those men have arrived at, will have a most important bearing upon our trade here, and must benefit us in every branch of our business. As Carriers for the Northern districts, it will ensure to us a reliable source from which we can draw all the Freighters we may require, and as the Settlement increases in population, so will competition arise amongst them for fuller employment in this, their favorite occupation, and enable us to reduce the rates of freight to a minimum standard, directly saving a large sum of money annually. Indirectly we shall profit by this location, insomuch that getting our transport conveyed so cheaply we will be able to dispense with a transport establishment of our own, and all the enormous expenses and ruinous losses yearly incurred. Thirdly, save hundreds of pounds in oxen, carts, harness and **grits** be enabled to reduce our staff of employees to a third of our present force and thus indirectly diminish our expenditure by at the lowest calculation two thousand pounds sterling per annum.

Our general pursuits and trade will also thereby acquire a healthy and firm impulse. We have business transactions with this class, already amounting to over three thousand pounds sterling per Outfit which may be extended year by year at our pleasure. You are aware that a very large proportion of the french [sic] Métis population of Manitoba are prairie Hunters, annually wintering in the plains of the Saskatchewan, getting their livelihood in pursuit of the Buffalo and in bartering with the Indians. Those men take their Outfits, at Manitoba, whither they render the produce of their hunts and trade. The majority probably deal entirely with the Company at Fort Garry, but a very great number are equipped by the Winnipeg Shop Keepers. Now Sir if we can Outfit those people here, get their furs etc. into our hands at from ten to fifteen per cent discount on R.R. prices, I submit we shall get the furs & Robes at cheaper rates than they can be bought for at Fort Garry, freight and charges included, and prevent any of the trade falling into the hands of the Winnipeg Merchants. This is no **chimera**, it can be done, and depends upon ourselves whether we monopolize the whole business of the Country or allow strangers to step in and take it out of our hands. Those men would not go to Manitoba this season if we were in a position to Outfit them here, they have offered to dispose of all their stuff to me at the aforementioned discount and abandon their intended trip to Fort Garry. It is entirely out of my power to meet their demands, nevertheless a good deal of their Robes & furs will fall into my hands. If we can meet the **exigencies** of the trade, if we can get up here, next summer a fully equipped shop, a generous and varied assortment of such goods as are generally sold in Fort Garry shops, a good supply of hardware, crockery, groceries, common farming implements as ploughs spades etc. These people will deal entirely with us, and instead of the miserable profitless, piddling [sic] business we are now doing, we shall extend our traffic, and become in reality, what we are now only in seeming Merchants in very deed, prepared to avail ourselves of our advantages and build up a business in the Country, which shall stand the test of all opposition and meet the demand of the trade with the populations present and future. In truth so many interests are bound up in the prosperity of this new enterprise that I cannot impress too forcible [sic] the **cogency** of adopting decide [sic] measures to encourage the formation of this colony. We shall have at our doors, a class of men habituated to make the pursuit of the buffalo their chief means of support, and will always secure from them a fair share of the produce of their hunts, to render I trust our contracted establishments, and general business independent for provision. The certainty of being always able to keep a years [sic] stock in hand will allow us to dictate the market price for pemican [sic], and prevent the necessity of paying, as, has hitherto been done, in seasons of partial failure of buffalo, the exorbitant [sic] prices of nine and twelve pence per tib for pemmican again as no reliance can be placed in a profitable provision trade with Indians. We have year by year, for the whole summer season, been obliged to keep in the plains an Officer, from ten to fifteen men, with their families, to cure plain provisions, and from sixty to one hundred carts and animals to bring home the provisions, thus saved. The waste of goods, destruction of property, loss of Cattle, and expenses incurred in feeding and paying this great migratory train is incalculable, more especially after, as has frequently happened, a long absence they return with all but empty carts. With a large settlement of Métis hunters in our midst there will be no object in perpetuating this **incubus** and the abolition of this expenditure will add no small figure to the profits of our trade.<sup>20</sup>



Lawrence Clarke, Hudson's Bay Company Factor, 1870's.

## Conclusion

Although the Métis people played a major role in the acceptance of Manitoba into Confederation, many of them chose to travel to the Saskatchewan District to continue their life of buffalo hunting and trading. In time, they converted their winter camp settlements into permanent communities which became centres of activity in the Canadian West.

Many of these communities still exist today, although the role they fill is less prominent than it was in the late nineteenth century. Many contemporary Métis concerns, such as the acquisition of a land base and self-determination, have their roots in the problems experienced by their forefathers in the Saskatchewan District. These problems and the factors which comprised and affected them will be examined in greater detail in Books 2 to 5.

## Endnotes

1. E. E. Rich., *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, p. 30.
2. Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer 1978, p. 54.
3. Rev. A. G. Morice, O.M.I., *The Catholic Church in The Canadian Northwest*, Winnipeg: \_\_\_\_\_, 1936, p. 13.
4. Margaret MacLeod and W. L. Morton, *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974, p. 70.
5. Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement, Its Rise, Progress, and Present State*, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972, pp. 325-326.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 326-328.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 328-330.
8. Abbe Georges Dugas, *Histoire de l'ouest Canadien*, Montreal, 1906 as cited in D. B. Sealey and A. S. Lussier, *The Other Natives; the Métis, Vol. I*, Winnipeg: Manitoba Métis Federation Press, 1978, p. 51.
9. See Dugas, as cited in Sealey and Lussier, p. 58.
10. See Sealey and Lussier, p. 61.
11. George F. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961, p. 51.
12. Excerpt from an article in *The NorWester*, 1860, as cited in Peter Charlebois, *The Life of Louis Riel*, Toronto: New Canada Press, 1978, p. 29.
13. Vernon C. Fowke, *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957, pp. 25-26.
14. Alexander Begg, *History of the North-West, Vol. I*, Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company., 1894, pp. 476-478.
15. See Peter Charlebois, p. 86.
16. George F. Stanley, *Louis Riel*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1963, p. 160.
17. D. Bruce Sealey and Antoine S. Lussier, *The Métis: Canada's Forgotten People*, Winnipeg: Manitoba Métis Federation Press, 1975, p. 96-97.
18. See Sealey and Lussier, *The Métis: Canada's Forgotten People*, p. 42.
19. Hardisty Papers, Vol. I, File 31, Glenbow Alberta Institute; Report of a Meeting of the Métis Winterers at the Mission of St. Laurent, December 31, 1871.
20. Hardisty Papers, Vol. 2, File 34, Glenbow Alberta Institute; Lawrence Clarke to Donald A. Smith, January 15, 1872.

# Vocabulary

All definitions denoted by an asterisk (\*) are from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, third edition, Oxford University Press, 1973. Other definitions are explained in the context in which they appear.

- p. 5 **Oblate**: A religious order of the Roman Catholic Church, the members of which served as missionaries to the indigenous people of the Canadian North West.
- p. 5 \* **Indigenous**: born to or produced naturally in a land or region.
- p. 9 \* **Accessible**: capable of being entered or reached.
- p. 10 \* **Missioner**: one sent on a mission; a missionary.
- p. 10 \* **Asperities**: lack of polish, ruggedness.
- p. 12 \* **Entrepreneur**: a contractor acting as intermediary between capital and labour.
- p. 15 \* **Skirmish**: an irregular engagement between two small bodies of troops.
- p. 17 \* **Convey**: to lead, conduct.
- p. 17 **Sisitous**: members of a specific Indian band within the Dakota Nation.
- p. 17 **Yanktons**: members of a specific Indian band within the Dakota Nation.
- p. 18 \* **Calumet**: a tobacco pipe with a bowl of clay, and a long reed stem carved and ornamented with feathers.
- p. 20 \* **Indolent**: slothful, lazy, idle.
- p. 21 **Manifest Destiny**: the policy pursued by the United States during the mid-nineteenth century, under which they intended to take possession of the entire North American continent.
- p. 21 \* **Aggrandizement**: increase in size.
- p. 23 \* **Amendment**: the alteration of a bill before parliament.
- p. 23 \* **Expedient**: advantageous; proper or suitable to the circumstances of the case.
- p. 24 **Scrip**: taken from the word description, therefore, a ticket with a description of the land or dollar value intended to satisfy the claim.
- p. 26 \* **Transcript**: written copy.
- p. 26 \* **Nem con**: no one dissenting or opposing.
- p. 26 \* **Assent**: official, judicial or formal sanction.
- p. 26 \* **Consolation**: alleviation of sorrow or mental distress.
- p. 26 \* **Helot**: a serf, a bondsman.
- p. 27 \* **Mattock**: an agricultural tool used for loosening up hard ground, grubbing up trees, etc.
- p. 27 \* **Abject**: low in regard, mean-spirited, despicable.
- p. 27 \* **Pittance**: a small allowance of food and drink; scanty rations or diet.
- p. 27 \* **Remunerative**: profitable.
- p. 27 \* **Ultimo**: of last month.
- p. 28 \* **Grits**: oats husked but not ground; coarse oatmeal.
- p. 28 \* **Chimera**: a mere wild fancy; an unfounded conception.
- p. 28 \* **Exigencies**: urgent wants.
- p. 28 **Cogency**: powerful, forcible.
- p. 28 \* **Incubus**: a nightmare.

## Questions

The questions which follow have been selected to reinforce the objectives of *Book 1: Contrasting Worlds*. They can be used for discussion, research or assignment purposes.

Students should not be expected to answer all of the questions. It is suggested that the teacher select a variety of questions appropriate to the class.

**Objective 1: to provide information about the events which led to the Métis migration to Saskatchewan in the early 1870's.**

Questions

1. Compare the methods used by Great Britain and France to establish their fur trade industries in Canada.
2. Identify Dr. Schultz's motives in promoting

annexation of the West by Canada.

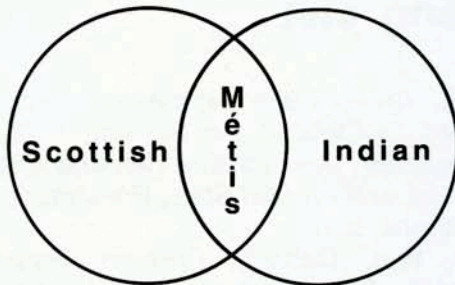
3. In an essay or class discussion, support or refute the following interpretation:  
The Métis and other inhabitants of the Red River were aware of the impending economic and industrial changes sweeping across the world. They wanted to participate as equal partners in this change. The Government of Canada, by ignoring the intent of Clauses 10 to 15 of the List of Rights, created a situation whereby the new province of Manitoba had to become an agricultural region dependent upon eastern Canadian industrial goods.
4. Explain why the Métis chose to leave Manitoba to establish themselves in other communities and regions.



**Objective 2: to expand the students' knowledge of the Métis as a distinct cultural group.**

**Questions**

- Using the diagram as a guide, research the ways in which cultural integration occurred in the following areas:
  - language
  - political structure
  - transportation
  - dance
  - clothing
  - farming
  - hunting



- Identify reasons which could explain the Métis buffalo hunters' opposition to Governor Macdonnell's order restricting the buffalo hunt trade.
- Referring to Quotation 19, what reasons did Lawrence Clarke give the Métis for establishing a permanent community on the South Saskatchewan River?

**Objective 3: to create in students an understanding of the role played by the Métis in the development of the Canadian West.**

**Questions**

- Describe the role of the middleman in the fur trade.
- Explain how the buffalo hunt, the introduction of the horse and the expansion of the fur trade are related.
- The struggle of the fur companies to control the trade route through the Selkirk Settlement culminated in the incident at Seven Oaks. Quotation 4 implies that the Métis were used by the North West Company. Decide to what extent the Métis involvement in the Skirmish at Seven Oaks served the interests of:
  - the Métis
  - the North West Company
- In your own words, describe the positions taken by the Dakota and the Métis when they entered into the peace negotiations.
- The Sayer trial became much more significant than the trial of four men. Explain how this case signified the trial of Hudson's Bay Company rule and also, in some respects, the trial of Cuthbert Grant.
- Referring to a map of Saskatchewan, explain

why the Métis chose to settle in such large numbers around the St. Laurent/Prince Albert area.

- What relationship do Clauses 16, 17 and 18 of the List of Rights have to the 1984 French minority language rights issue in Manitoba?

**Enrichment Questions**

- Predict the areas in which conflict might arise as a result of:
  - a government that has little local involvement (e.g., the Canadian government which had little input from the Métis, Indians or European settlers).
  - a government that is primarily interested in increasing business profits for itself (e.g., the Hudson's Bay Company's government).
- Knowing that Columbus incorrectly named the inhabitants of the Americas "Indians" and also knowing that these inhabitants represent numerous cultures:
  - is the continued use of the term Indian justified in our present society?
  - If not, what term or terms could be used to describe these peoples? If so, explain why continued usage of the term is justified.
- In a chart, list the pros and cons of the North West Company establishing a centre at Fort William (Thunder Bay).
- Explain how the Selkirk settlers posed a threat to:
  - Métis land rights
  - Métis trade with the fur companies.
- In the peace negotiations between the Dakota and the Métis what, if any, compromises did each side have to make?
- Referring to the exchange of letters between the Dakota and the Métis, describe the role of the women and children in obtaining peace?
- Reread the letter from the Dakota, in which they asked the Métis to enter into adoptive relations with those who killed members of their families. Speculate on the degree to which these arrangements might be successful.
- Explain why the promotion of greater settlement in the West caused apprehension among the Métis and Indians.
- Was it premature for Canada to send a road construction crew to the Red River in 1867? Defend your position.
- Using the illustrations of the different methods of land division (page 22), predict the kinds of problems involved in implementing the township system in an existing river lot community.
- Paraphrase Clause 5 of the List of rights and identify some of the implications of this clause.

12. Referring to Quotation 19, explain why you think the Church might support the establishment of a permanent Métis settlement.
13. Referring to Quotation 20, describe the economic plans developed by Lawrence Clarke

- and the Hudson's Bay Company for the Métis community of St. Laurent.
14. Referring to Quotations 19 and 20, compare and contrast Lawrence Clarke's relationship with his attitude, toward the Métis.

## Recommended Reading List

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Saskatchewan Remembers **1885**  
**NORTH  
WEST**  
*Centennial* **1985**