

1929



Les reçus

Mr. Edmond J. Boyer,
BATOCHÉ,
Sask.

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SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, THURSDAY, JULY 25, 1935.

Riel's Relatives Mingle With 1885 Veterans Who Fought Under Middleton

Big Reunion Held at Wakaw; Boucher, Reeve Of St. Louis R.M., Says Batoche Scene of First School in N.W. Territories

Special to the Star-Phoenix
WAKAW, July 24.—Fifty years after the Riel Rebellion, relatives of Louis Riel, rebel leader who was hung at Regina for the part he played in skirmishes in Saskatchewan in 1885, Indians and Metis to-day with white men who fought under General Middleton met today at Batoche, where Riel staged his last stand. More than 1,000 visitors attended the fiftieth anniversary celebration and sports day, not forgetting to attend special masses sung in the Roman Catholic Church.

Proceedings for the day were opened with High Mass, said in the Batoche Catholic Church by Father Robert and by Father Boucher of St. Louis. In the church grounds stands a monument erected to the memory of those who fell in the four-day battle waged at Batoche in 1885.

EAT BUFFALO MEAT

Buffalo meat, supplied by the Dominion Government, was the fare eaten by the visitors at a banquet held on the sports grounds shortly after church service.

W. A. Boucher, reeve of St. Louis Municipality and a director of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, was the main speaker. After welcoming delegates from distant points, he told of the early history of Batoche; how, in 1875 the settlement was formed following the founding of a Roman Catholic Church parish under Father Moulin. At Batoche, the speaker stated, the first school in the North-West Territories was built. Today the school was known as School District No. 1.

The speaker traced the happenings during the rebellion, blaming misunderstanding for the strife. After the rebellion, Batoche municipality had developed into one of the most quiet and prosperous ones in the Province.

Samuel A. Nault, St. Boniface,

Manitoba, alderman, and president of the Union Nationale Matisee Saint Joseph, and secretary of the Metis Historical Society of Manitoba, saw the actions of Riel as inspired by the rebel chief's love for the Metis. In Riel's mind, the welfare of the Metis was foremost, the speaker asserted.

Riel did not lead his followers against the British flag, for his forces carried a banner which to Riel was symbolic of Canada," Mr. Nault asserted. The flag carried the Union Jack emblem together with the fleur-de-lys, emblematic of the unity which existed between the French and British in Canada, the speaker asserted.

Other speakers were Father Boucher of St. Louis, Father Robert and Father Brunet of St. Boniface, who brought greetings from the Bishop of St. Boniface.

Honore Riel, of St. Vital, Manitoba, a nephew of the rebel leader, addressed the meeting briefly.

Other visitors included Mr. and Mrs. Alex Nault, Fort Garry; Mrs. E. Grouette, Fort Francis, Ontario; Max Riel, nephew of the rebel leader; Joseph Lavallee, a third nephew; M. Lavallee, of St. Boniface; Edmund Lepine, son of D. Lepine, Riel's lieutenant; A. Jourdin and R. Bousquet, of St. Vital; Louis Leillet, grandson of Louis Riel; William Beauchemin, of St. Charles, Manitoba; Joseph Delorme, a Rebellion veteran from Stamelle; Urbain Delorme, Joseph Landry and E. Tucker, all of Stamelle; and Vital Nault, of Strose du Lac.

BATOCHÉ, Sask. (CP) — this patch of elevated prairie, the breeze comes out of where to make the trees turn.

From the floor of the South Saskatchewan River valley it rises up the steep banks to make the aspens tremble and softly disturb a tranquillity that has prevailed for more than a three-quarters of a century.

Serenity, close on the heels of chaos, came to this plateau years ago this week after the Metis, people of Indian and white ancestry, made a bloody stand over land rights. The rebellious half-breeds, led by Louis Riel, lost the fight, and both the people and the place began a long journey into obscurity.

What remains here of the Northwest Rebellion is a church and a rectory, now a museum. Rifle pits dug by the Metis have been obliterated by the plow as have many of the trenches made by militia units under the command of Maj.-Gen. Frederick Middleton.

LEADS FOR NOTICE

Unlike many national historic sites, Batoche is almost forgotten place, and when the wind comes up it seems to lead for someone to sit up and take notice of what once happened here. But Batoche is off the beaten track which leads 50 miles south to Saskatchewan, and visitors are scarce except on warm summer weekends.

The Battle of Batoche began May 8, 1885, and ended four days later. It was a climax to many years of agitation by the Metis to have their pleas for land ownership recognized.

The area was settled about 1870 by Metis discouraged at attempts to solve their land problems in the Manitoba Red River Colony. In 1884, with settlers pushing farther west each year, the Metis found themselves in a similar situation.

They had no legal right to their land, and attempts to have the Canadian government grant them special concessions were futile. Frustrated, they sent for Riel, the school teacher who had led them at Red River.

NAME FROM EXILE

Riel, banished from Canada for five years for his part in

about 160 Metis and Indians under Riel's commander-in-chief, Gabriel Dumont, were waiting in ambush at Fish Creek.

Ten soldiers and 11 Metis were killed in the ensuing battle and Middleton held up his advance for two weeks to await supplies and reinforcements and to arrange evacuation of wounded soldiers.

When Middleton did arrive at the outskirts of Batoche he was astonished to find the Metis had built a skilful defence system of rifle pits and trenches commanding all entrances to the settlement.

The first day of the battle the militia, with its artillery and famed Gatling gun—in use in Canada for the first time—didn't budge the rebels.

The second and third day were equally inconclusive but on May 11 the soldiers ran low on ammunition, and within two hours Batoche was captured.

REVOLT WAS OVER

The Northwest Rebellion ended then and there. Middleton reported eight dead and 45 wounded on his side and 51 killed and 173 wounded in the Metis camp. Dumont's figures of 12 Metis killed and three wounded are considered more correct.

Riel surrendered to three of Middleton's scouts on May 15. On Aug. 1 he was found guilty of treason and Nov. 16 died on the scaffold at the mounted police barracks in Regina.

The wily Dumont eluded police and soldiers and escaped to Montana. He later returned unnoticed to Batoche, where he died in 1906.

Today, not far from the large stone which marks Dumont's grave, the rectory and the church stand much the same as they did in 1885. Bullet holes are visible on the front of each building.

In 1885 about 258 persons lived at Batoche, but now only 10 occupy two short rows of houses near the church. Most of this number are retired and only two of them are children. A school which once accommodated 50 children was closed five years ago.

FATHER WAS IN IT

One of the residents is George Pilon, 70, whose father, Barthelle, fought in the rebellion.

"There used to be lots of people here," he said in his

of the battlefield. As soon as the children go to school they go away to the cities and they get good wages."

He doesn't know much about what happened during those four days in May because, he said, when he was young he didn't care.

"I was never interested before. If I had known, I would have taken down stories from the old people. But now they're all gone. It's too late.

"Now we hear a story here and there. It's no use to repeat these when we don't know."

Said Ed Bruce, a Metis who is officer-in-charge of the site: "It seems that after the battle they all stopped talking about it."

MORE VISITORS COME

Things are beginning to change once again at Batoche. The federal government, which owns part of the site, is negotiating to buy portions of the battlefield owned and farmed by the handful of residents and outsiders.

Ten years ago next month Batoche was dedicated as a historic site, and Mr. Bruce said the number of visitors is increasing each year. Also, more and more school groups are coming to visit the site in May and June.

He says 300 to 500 persons sometimes visit the grounds and buildings on a summer Sunday. Some of them wander through the fields and now and then pick up relics—mostly spent bullets.

However, Batoche still leaves the impression that it is forgotten—both as a part of Canada and as a part of Canadian history.

Mr. Bruce disagrees. "It's not forgotten," he said, casting an eye towards the grassy depressions that once were Middleton's foxholes. "It'll never be forgotten."

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CAME FROM EXILE

Riel, banished from Canada for five years for his part in the death of an Ontario lumberer, came to Batoche from St. Peter's Mission near Fort Benton, Mont. Throughout the winter of 1884-85 he planned

of a provincial allies.

The new government was declared March 19, 1885, and the Metis took to arms when they heard a column of Northwest Mounted Police was on its way from Regina to arrest their leaders. Unknown to the rebels, the police were going to Prince Albert to reinforce the garrison there.

By then trouble was brewing throughout northern Saskatchewan, and around the end of March 100 volunteers and police fought a brief but devastating battle with a band of rebels at Duck Lake, just west of Batoche. Twelve members of the force were killed, along with four Metis.

News of the bloody encounter at Duck Lake spread rapidly east. Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald ordered Middleton to organize troops and travel west for a showdown.

CAUGHT IN AMBUSH

The trail to Batoche was not

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The Ill-Starred Louis Riel

By W. J. Healy, Provincial Librarian

If you were a schoolchild anywhere in Ontario in the early 1870's, you will remember how Louis Riel was pictured to you as a scowling, dark-visaged, savage, bloody, murdering half-breed rebel. In Toronto we felt more closely the horror of the killing of Thomas Scott at Fort Garry. The Scotts were Toronto people. Toronto was a small town then, in comparison with the great city it is today.

Among the present writer's boyhood memories are Twelfth of July picnics in the Queen's Park in Toronto. During the speech-making the bandsmen used to lie on the grass with their instruments about them, in the shade of a spreading maple or horsechestnut tree, listening to the speeches and keeping an eye on the small boys who were trying to sneak near the big drum and take a whack at it. The speechmaking was vehement and sincere, and was listened to intently by the assembled Orangemen. Staunch, true-hearted people they were, they and their wives, good neighbors and strong partisans. If you had their friendship, you had it for always. Religious liberty was the theme of the speechmakers. What more inspiring theme could a speaker have! Religious liberty means the right to differ, the right to dissent. So does political liberty. All progress comes from this right and this freedom. Where it is not, people sink into sheep-minded subjection to despotism and absolutism.

Memories of those speeches in Toronto came into the present writer's mind one night a few weeks ago, when he was at a meeting of the Metis Historical society at the old home of Louis Riel in St. Vital on the bank of the Red River. He remembered how Riel was pictured to him in Toronto long ago. And there came into his

memories and the shameless greed of speculators"), it was caused by official blundering and neglect to do the right thing. Of Riel's part in both, there is no room here to write. Of Riel himself, Archbishop Tache wrote years later that "he was gifted with brilliant qualities of head and heart, but of an insensate pride and unbridled ambition, which poisoned his intelligence."

At that meeting in the old Riel house in St. Vital a few weeks ago Samuel A. Nault, president of the Metis Historical society, handed to the present writer as a gift to the Provincial Library a bound copy of the "History of the Metis Nation in the Canadian West," a stout book of 452 pages, which, after more than twenty years since it was begun, has been published this summer. It is a book which tells the whole story of the people of mixed French-Canadian and Indian blood in the West. It is in French. Mr. Nault and his associates hope to be able eventually to publish it in English too. It will live as a book of real importance in Canadian history.

Among the things which at different times have been given to the present writer for this Library is a copy framed under glass of the sheet of paper issued as an extra of the Regina Leader on Nov. 17, 1885—the account of the execution of Riel that morning, written by the gifted Nicholas Flood Davin, M.P. Under the glass is a lock of Riel's hair, which Father Andre, who was with Riel on the scaffold, gave D. W. Bole, one of the witnesses of the execution. (Mr. Bole in 1904 was elected M.P. for Winnipeg, which had only one member at that time.) The trial book, in which Judge Hugh Richardson made his notes during the trial of Riel, is also in the Library, with the brief and notes of the celebrated B. B. Osler, Q.C., who was of Crown counsel in that trial, a letter written by Riel from his

death cell to Judge Richardson, and a letter he wrote to J. W. Taylor, United States consul in Winnipeg, the night before he was executed. There is room here to mention only one more of the many things relating to Riel which are in the Library. It is the complete file of "The New Nation" (the only one in existence), the remarkable weekly newspaper published by Riel's "provisional government" during the nine months of its rule in Fort Garry, which ended with the arrival of the troops under Colonel Wolseley on Aug. 24, 1871.

Riel fled from Fort Garry that morning, in a driving rain. Captain Huyshe, who was Colonel Wolseley's chief-of-staff, records in his narrative, that the next day a traveller arrived at Fort Garry who told of meeting Riel and two of his colleagues on the trail. They had crossed the Red River on a raft they made of logs and fence rails tied with their braces and neck-ties and some of their garments. Riel lost one boot in the crossing. They had nothing to eat but a few dried fish they got at a farm house. Riel said to the traveller: "Tell them that he who ruled in Fort Garry only yesterday is now a houseless wanderer with nothing to eat but two dried suckers!" With his sense of drama, we may well believe he would declaim the words in a tone and with a pose and gesture befitting a historic scene. He would feel himself a youthful Lear, standing drenched on the blasted heath and smiling a wry smile at the dice which Destiny had thrown against him.

Birthdays

Dr. Chester Martin, Toronto, Ont.; born St. John, N.B., June 22, 1882.

Hon. John Bracken, Winnipeg; born Ellisville, Ont., June 22, 1863.

John McRae, Winnipeg; born Bearton, Ont., June 22, 1862.

85
told about Riel by Mrs. Cowan and Mrs. Black and Miss Bannatyne and others of the women who a decade ago still survived from the old era in Red River. They remembered Louis Riel as he was in his early twenties. They said he was a handsome youth, with fine eyes and a curly mop of hair and an excellent opinion of himself. He was a romantic figure on a horse, and meeting them he would sweep off his hat with a gallant bow. Of a family notable in Red River for three generations (his father, a Louis Riel, too, "the miller of the Seine," had been a leading figure in the agitation for free trade in furs), young Riel had been at college in Montreal, he had lived two years in the United States, he was a public speaker eloquent in both French and English, and he knew also how to talk agreeably and interestingly to young ladies. He was a poet, but hardly a Shelley. Some of his verses are in this Library.

* * *

His twenty-fifth birthday was on Oct. 24, 1869. A few days later, on Nov. 3rd, as leader of the discontented element in Red River, he marched into Fort Garry and established his "provisional government" in that walled stronghold. The developments of "the Red River insurrection" followed fast. Riel was not the instigator of all that trouble. Like "the North-West insurrection" in 1885 (of which Laurier said at a meeting in Montreal on the Sunday following the hanging of Riel at Regina: "Had I been born on the banks of the Saskatchewan I would myself have shouldered a musket to fight against the neglect of gov-

Purchaser keep this receipt for amounts paid. Please follow directions on the face of the Note, and write name and address of Payee on the back of this Coupon which must be produced if enquiry is made regarding payment.

L'envoyeur garde ce reçu des montants payés. Veuillez observer les instructions imprimées au recto du bon et inscrire le nom et l'adresse du bénéficiaire au verso de ce coupon qui doit être produit en cas d'enquête au sujet du paiement du bon.

\$16-049405

\$5.

REVENUE TAX PAID,
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COMMISSION (DROIT)
3 CENTS

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carte le montant à verser et l'adresse
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218-04205

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\$16-047993

\$5.

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TAXE DU REVENU PAYÉE
COMMISSION (DROIT)
3 CENTS

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Timbre du bureau
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Purchaser keep this receipt for amounts paid. Please follow directions on the face of the Note and write name and address of payee on the back of this Coupon which must be produced if any duty is made regarding payment.

L'envoyeur garde ce reçu des montants payés. Veuillez observer les instructions imprimées au verso de la note et écrire le nom et l'adresse du bénéficiaire au verso de ce coupon. Ce coupon doit être produit en cas d'impôt sur le paiement.

210047093

REVENUE TAX
TAXE REVENU
COMMISION (20%)
CENTS

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Timbre du bureau
d'insinuation

S. A. Pearl
St Boniface

REMITTER'S
RECEIPT

6438-00204

STAMP OF ISSUING OFFICE	
Duck Lake	
APR 3 1936	
SASK.	
TIMBRE DU BUREAU D'ÉMISSION	

DOLLARS	CENTS
15	—

COMMISSION - DROIT	
	15

REÇU DE L'ENVOYEUR

DUCK LAKE, SASK.

St. Louis foot.

Le 23 aout / 38

M. E. Dyer.

Batache foot.

Cher M. Dyer: -

Cela est un
grand plaisir pour
moi d'être en-
jointe à votre fête.

Ce fut un beau succès.

Je vous remercie bien
sincèrement pour votre

offre, qu'elle est généreuse,

je l'accepte bien

volontiers, quoique mes

compromis que je ne

peux pas aller à votre

fête dans un but

lucratif, mais bien

par conviction et

pour faire plaisir à
mes bons amis de
chez vous.

Je le regrette qu'une
chose, c'est de ne pas
avoir été très bien
en ces jours, pour mes
dames, à cet occasion
un bon discours avec
du feu patriotique.

Si dans l'avenir mes
faibles efforts peuvent
vous servir en quelque
manière, vous que je
serai toujours prêt
et avec plaisir, de
me mettre à votre
entière disposition.

Merci à votre Comité
à nos respectueux saluts
en T. E. Després, ^{secr.}

M.R.

STATION

1931

Smith Lake
 d Genais S.D.

July 20
 St. Lawrence

EIGHT PER CENT
 INTEREST WILL BE CHARGED
 ON OVERDUE ACCOUNTS



TRADE MARK
 REGISTERED

DATE	NO. OF PIECES		FEET	PRICE	AMOUNT	TOTAL AMOUNT
25	1/6	24	120	50		
25	1/4	6	60	80	510	
1	1/12	12	126		75	
					585	
					30	
					555	

Amb. Gervais 15
 4^{re} Pentures 10
 3^{re} " 21
 Poteaux 90
 Ouvrages .75
 Prives 2.50

4.60
 5.55
10.15

Planches 25
10.40