



Relations with the First Nations

Chapter 1



74 The Dominion of Canada, 1873



From 1870 to 1873, Canada expanded:

- In **1870**, the Northwest Territories entered the Canadian federation. The province of Manitoba was created.
- In **1871**, British Columbia joined the Dominion. The federal government promised to build a railway line to link it to the other provinces and take over its debts.
- In **1873**, Prince Edward Island, also indebted, agreed to join the federation.

Acquiring lands in the West (1869)

The first objective of the policy of territorial expansion was to acquire the immense territory situated west of the Dominion's borders.

The government had three reasons for wanting to purchase the lands in the West:

- 1) to offer new Canadians a place to settle
- 2) to create a larger economic base as a means of promoting the Dominion's development
- 3) to protect the undefended lands of the West from American occupation and annexation

In 1868, Canada sent delegates to London to negotiate the purchase of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory, for which the Hudson's Bay Company still held the titles of ownership. In July 1869, the transaction was concluded, and Canada acquired a vast territory of 6 475 000 km² for \$1.5 million. In July 1870, this new territory, which brought together the North-Western Territory and Rupert's Land, officially became a part of the Dominion of Canada under the name of the Northwest Territories.



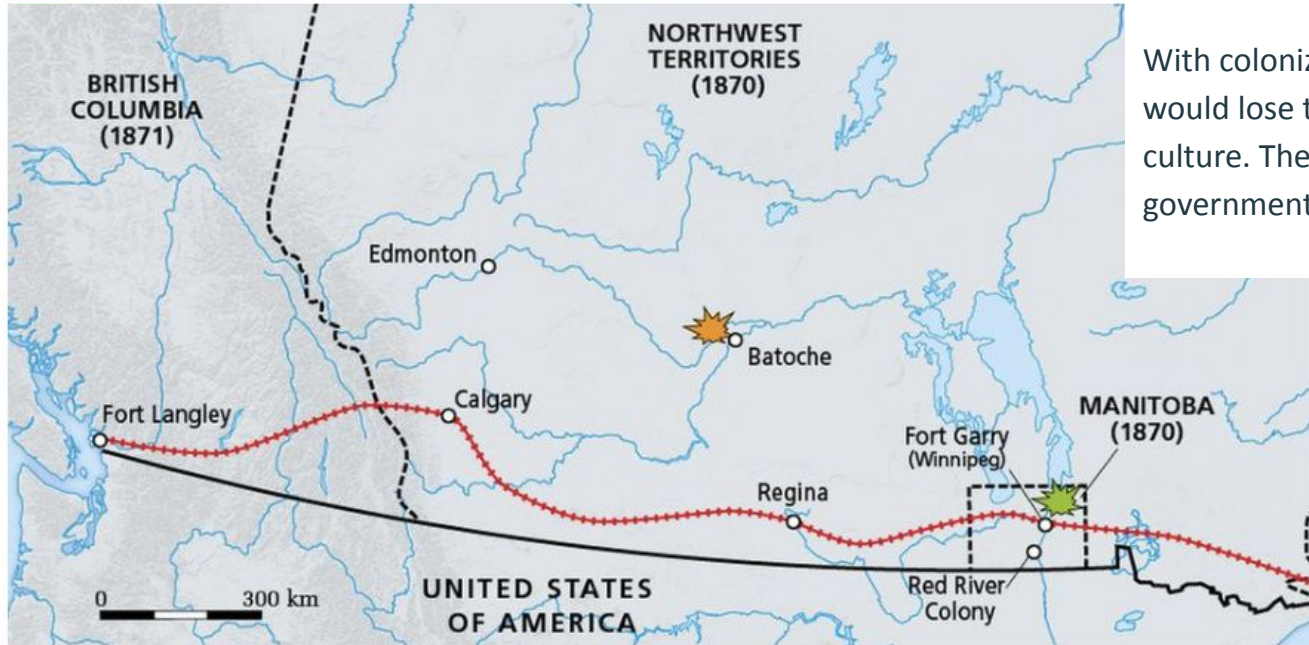


WHAT WILL HE DO WITH HIM?

Relations with the Metis

When the Dominion of Canada acquired land in the West in 1869, there were First nations, metis and some colonists who lived there. There were about 10,000 Metis in the Red River region. Most of them were French and Catholic.

75 The Métis uprisings of 1869 and 1885



With colonization, the Metis worried they would lose their lands, way of life and culture. They fought against the Canadian government twice.

Legend

- 1869 uprising
- 1885 uprising
- Railway (completed in 1885)
- Definite border
- Approximate border

The first Metis uprising: The Red River Rebellion 1869

Once the Canadian government acquired the land in 1869, they started preparing to colonize the lands where the Metis had settled. They sent out surveyors to divide the land for the colonists.

At this time, the Metis established the National Committee of Metis in order to defend their rights. Louis Riel led the committee. They formed a provisional government to negotiate their territory joining the Dominion of Canada as a province with territorial, religious and language rights.

77 The provisional government of the Métis nation, 1870



The members of the Métis provisional government, led by Louis Riel (at the centre of the photograph)

tiated the territory's entry into the Dominion of Canada on the basis of a list of rights.



1. That the Territories heretofore [formerly] known as Rupert's Land and Northwest shall not enter into the confederation of the Dominion, except as a province . . . with all the rights and privileges common to the different provinces of the Dominion. . . .

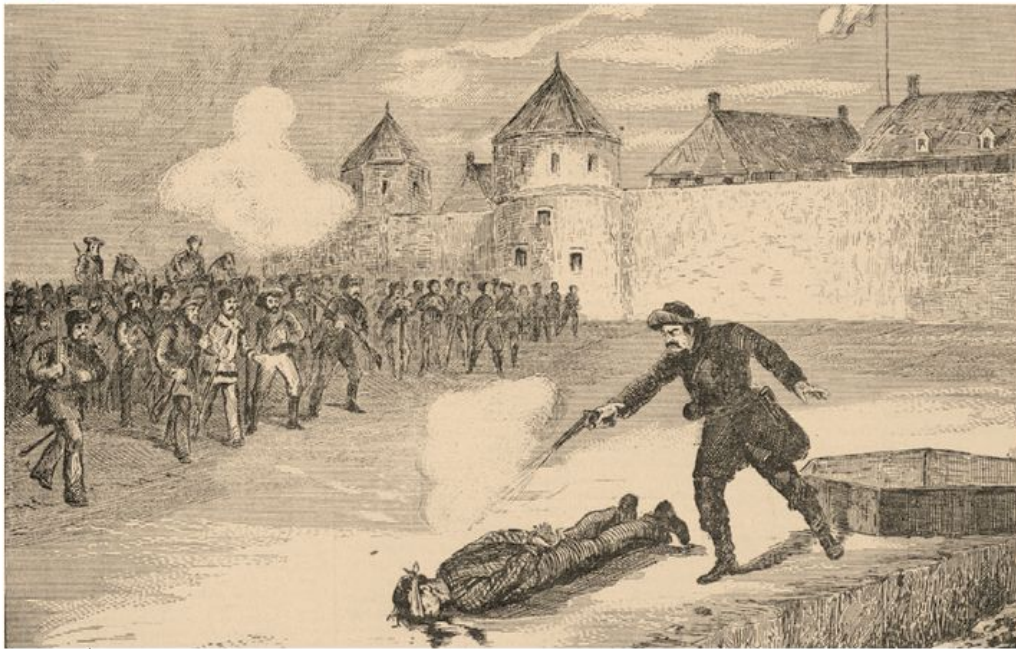
5. That all the properties, rights and privileges enjoyed by the people of this Province up to the date of our entering into the confederation be respected

7. That the schools be separate, and that the public money for schools be distributed among the different religious denominations in proportion to their respective populations, according to the system of the province of Québec. . . .

16. That the English and French languages be common in the Legislature and Courts, and that all public documents, as well as the acts of the Legislature, be published in both languages. ”

Excerpts from: Louis Riel, *List of Rights*, 1869.

78 The execution of Thomas Scott, 1870



Canadian Illustrated News, April 1870.

This image is from the English-language newspaper, the *Canadian Illustrated News*. In Ontario, Scott's execution was perceived as a murder for which Louis Riel was responsible. In the summer of 1870, after the creation of Manitoba, the Canadian government sent soldiers there, in part to calm Anglophones in Ontario. With the soldiers approaching, Louis Riel fled to the United States, where he remained in exile for a few months.

The Manitoba Act

With all the uproar, the Canadian government choice to sign an agreement with the provisional government known as the Manitoba Act. This led to the creation of a new province. The Canadian government promised the Metis titles for their land and recognition of their language and religion (mostly French and Catholic).

Over time, English settlers to the province increased, abolishing the rights of Francophone Catholics. Many Metis had left to settle in other areas of the west by 1891.

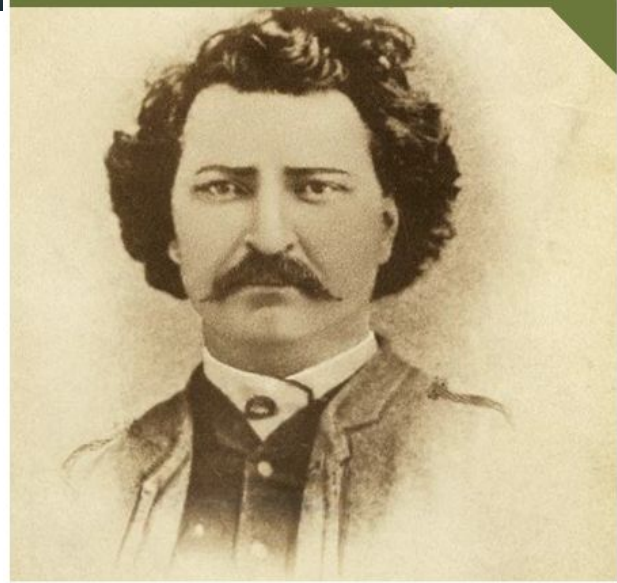


▲ Federal government surveyors

The second uprising

Many Metis in Manitoba settled in the Batoche region. In the 1880s, there was a large influx of colonists and the railway expansion reduced hunting and fishing territory of the Metis. The colonists continued settling on Metis territory. Louis Riel led another uprising in 1885. They organized another provisional government.

This angered many English Canadians. The Canadian government sent troops and had Riel and other arrested. Riel was charged with high treason for taking up arms against the government. He was imprisoned, tried, sentenced to death and then executed.



Louis Riel (1844–1885)

Louis Riel was from the Red River Settlement. After studying in Québec, he returned to the West, where he led uprisings in defence of Métis rights. Arrested during the capture of Batoche in 1885 and found guilty of high treason, Riel refused to plead insanity, despite the advice of his lawyers. Following his trial, Riel was sentenced to death by hanging.

79 Louis Riel's testimony

In 1886, Louis Riel, accused of the crime of high treason, testified at his trial.



When I came into the North-West . . . , I found the [Métis] eating the rotten pork of the Hudson Bay Company and getting sick and weak every day. . . . I saw they were deprived of responsible government. I saw that they were deprived of their public liberties We have made petitions . . . to the Canadian Government asking to relieve the condition of this country. . . . [S]o irresponsible is that Government to the North-West that . . . [it has done] nothing to satisfy the people They [government troops] came to Red River, they wanted to take possession of the country without consulting the people. . . . We took up arms against the invaders. ”

Excerpt from: *The Queen vs. Louis Riel*, 1886.

81 The Numbered Treaties in Western Canada, 1871–1921



Legend

- International border
- - - Provincial or territorial border
- Disputed border (drawn by the Privy Council in 1927)

For easier identification, today's borders have been used on this map.

Data from: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "Pre-1975 Treaties in Canada," 2013.

Catholic and Protestant missions

In the 19th century, Europeans and Canadians considered Indigenous culture and way of life as inferior to their own. Governments and Christian missionaries took measures to “civilize” Indigenous populations, convert them and adopt a Western lifestyle.

Missions were founded which were establishments set up by missionaries to bring together Indigenous people and evangelize them.

82

Evangelization of Indigenous people



This photograph, taken in 1886, shows the missionary Albert Lacombe (centre) and his interpreter with members of the Black Foot Confederacy. Father Lacombe was one of the most widely recognized Oblate missionaries in Western Canada.

83

Indian residential schools, a tool of assimilation



Thomas Moore, a young Indigenous boy who appears in both of these photographs, was placed in a residential school in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1873. The photograph on the left shows him before he entered the residential school. The photograph on the right shows him a few years later.

Residential schools

Goal: assimilation of young Indigenous

- Indigenous children learned the colonizers' language and culture
- Were isolated from their families and communities
- Forced to abandon their language, beliefs and customs
- Government and church ran these schools together

Indian Act



CANADA



THE CANADIAN
ENCYCLOPEDIA

CONSOLIDATION

Indian Act

R.S.C., 1985, c. 14

COORDINATION

Loi sur les Indiens

S.R.C. (1985), vol. 14

The Indian Act (1876)

In 1876, Canada adopted the first Indian Act. It was a process and effort to assimilate Indigenous people.

The objective of it was to enfranchise Indigenous people. The goal was for them to get rid of their status. Any Indigenous person who did not give up their status had the status of a minor.

With this act, authorities had a lot of control over Indigenous life including life on reserves. It has been amended many times over the years.



The abolition of traditional political structures and the imposition of band councils marked a turning point in the political history of First Nations in the 19th century.



What do the Métis uprisings,
residential schools, and the
Indian Act have in common?

