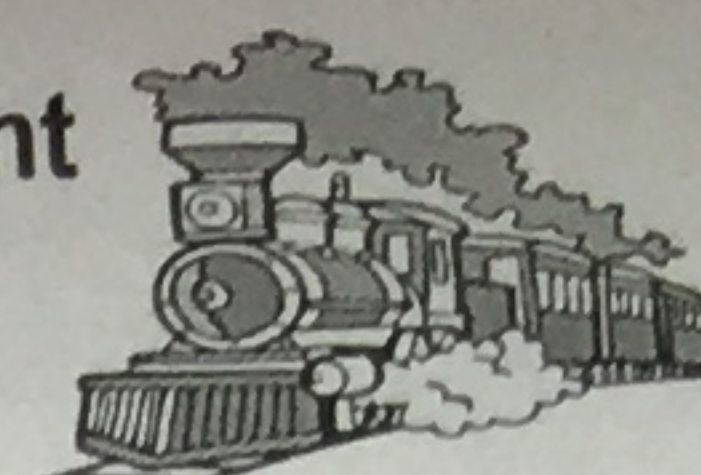


Red River Rebellion



Land Conflicts

By the fall of 1869, big changes were happening in the Red River Valley in Manitoba. The Canadian government was getting ready to buy Rupert's Land, which included the area around the Red River, from the Hudson's Bay Company. The people who lived there were upset and concerned about their future. They wanted a voice in what was to happen.



Surveyors plotting out homesteads

Even before the deal was done, the government sent **surveyors** into the area to mark the land for settlement. The surveyors acted as if the Canadian government already owned the land. This was very disturbing to the Métis, the Native People of Manitoba who were descendants of the French Fur Traders and the First Nations People, and some of the settlers. They were worried their land would be stolen from them.

WORD POWER

surveyor— someone whose job it is to measure and examine an area of land

Louis Riel was a prominent leader of the Métis. He organized Métis patrols to protect their homes and land. The surveyors started marking up "hay privilege" land. A hay privilege was the land at the back of a Métis farm on which the farmer cut his hay. Since the valley wasn't the property of the Canadian government yet, Riel and his patrols made the surveyors leave.

Riel and His Supporters



Riel with his supporters

Louis Riel and **John Bruce** formed a new organization called the **National Committee of the Métis**. This organization wanted to negotiate with the Canadian government before they took over. The Métis had been in the valley for a long time and felt they had earned rights that the government should respect.

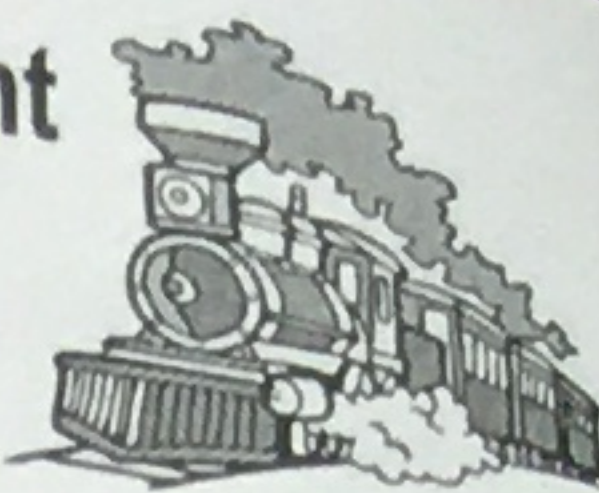
Some of the English settlers, who had come from Ontario, were in favour of a government takeover. They felt that Riel and his group were rebels. Riel did not see himself this way. He just wanted to protect his people's rights to be in the valley.

The conflicts continued to increase. On November 2, 1869, Riel took over **Fort Garry** and made it his headquarters. The fort was in a very good position to control and limit movement within the Red River Settlement.



Fort Garry on the Red River

Red River Rebellion (continued)



A Provisional Government

Throughout the winter of 1869 to 1870 there was fighting between the supporters of Riel and the English settlers. Several of Riel's opponents were imprisoned at Fort Garry. On December 7, 1869, Riel set up a provisional government there. The purpose of this temporary government was to negotiate the terms under which Manitoba would become part of Canada. He and his supporters drafted a **Métis List of Rights** that they wanted the Canadian Government to accept.

Métis demands included:

- *The right to elect their own Legislative Assembly*
- *The right to approve or reject any federal laws concerning Manitoba*
- *The territory of the North-West and Rupert's Land were to enter the Confederation as provinces*
- *The schools should be separated based on religion – Protestant and Catholic – and be paid for by the government*
- *French and English were to be the two official languages*
- *Treaties were to be signed with the First Nations people*
- *All existing rights and privileges were to remain*



The Métis at Fort Garry

Negotiations

The Canadian Government agreed to negotiate. They sent **Donald Smith**, a Hudson's Bay Company official to work with Riel. During these negotiations one of the prisoners, **Thomas Scott**, escaped from the fort. Scott was a strong and violent opponent of Riel and his supporters. Scott was recaptured, but he caused a lot of trouble with the other prisoners and the guards. Then, Riel made a big mistake. He held a court martial and had Scott shot on March 4, 1870. The execution of Scott set off many protests in Ontario. The people there demanded that Riel be punished for his crime. In Québec, however, there were many people who supported Riel and his cause.

Negotiations were able to continue and finally an agreement was reached. The Canadian Government agreed to some of the Métis' demands. In the meantime, protests in Ontario against Riel did not die down. Troops were sent to Fort Garry to capture Riel. By the time they arrived, he had escaped to the United States.