

Louis Riel Stands Up to the Dominion of Canada December 1869

Source: Canada The Story of a Developing Nation (McGraw-Hill Ryerson Text) Pgs. 145-148
(LDCSB Grade 8 History Core Textbook)



(Louis Riel is seated in the middle surrounded by his provisional Government members)

" In December 1867, Prime Minister Macdonald, of the newly created Dominion of Canada, passed seven resolutions in Parliament about the West. Canada would buy Rupert's Land from the HBC, build a road from Fort William on Lake Superior to the red River settlements and make the west part of Canada. Macdonald made William McDougall (from Ontario) Canada's first western Lieutenant Governor. Nobody even bothered to consult with the inhabitants of the Red River lands and settlements. It was assumed they would welcome the contingent from the Canadas.

On October 11, 1869, a small group of unarmed Metis, under the leadership of Louis Riel, stood on the survey chains that stretched across a Metis farm. Their message was clear: KEEP OUT!. You have no right to trespass on our land to do your survey work. The road builders left. Later the Metis built a barrier at Pembina to keep Lieutenant Governor William McDougall from entering their territory. On November 2, 1869, they capture Fort Gary without any violence. On December 7. 1869, the Metis captured the guarded house of the Canadian contingency leader, John Schultz, and seized his stored food.

December 8, 1869, Riel declared a provisional government to **negotiate** an agreement with Macdonald for the future of their territory."

Riel justified his actions in December 1869 on behalf of his people this way:

" If a large immigration from Canada were to take place, the Metis would probably be crowded out of a country which they claimed as their own; their wishes had been entirely ignored; they objected to any government coming from Canada without first consulting them; they [the Metis] were acting not for their own good, but for the good of the whole settlement; they did not feel they were breaking any law, but were acting in defense of their own liberty."