Chapter 8: The Métis

Pages: 168-192
In what ways did the Metis have an impact on the development of Western Canada?
TERMS

Demographics
York Boats
Pemmican
Manitoba Act
Rupert’s Land
Assimilation
Bill of Rights
Economy
Treason
Migrated
MAIN CONCEPTS

1. An Emerging Identity in the West
2. Conflict at Red River
3. Red River Resistance, 1869
4. The Creation of Manitoba
5. Second Uprising, 1885
The Métis Economy

- Over the years, the Métis developed a unique economy.
- They made a living based on the climate of their territory and on the resources found in it.
- They took jobs in the fur trade (food suppliers, interpreters, trappers) and hunted the buffalo in their area.
- They also grew crops on narrow river lots.
- The Métis shared their First Nations and European or Canadian identities through this mix of fur trading, hunting, and farming.
An important result of contact between First Nations and Europeans was the beginning of the Métis culture.
- People of mixed First Nations and European ancestry
- Mainly Catholic, but also had First Nation beliefs
- Lived in Red River (present-day Manitoba)
The Red River Cart

- Invented the Red River cart – a dependable form of transportation and used to haul buffalo meat.
- Why do you think this cart became the most dependable form of transportation in the Canadian west?
The Selkirk Colony

- In the early 1800’s, Scottish settlers came to Red River as part of the Selkirk Settlement.
- Lord Selkirk had bought this land from the Hudson’s Bay Company.
- The Métis had been living there for over 100 years but did not “own” the land. They were worried that they would be forced to leave their homes.
The Selkirk Colony did not take over the land of the Métis but some of the Métis community left Red River to move closer to the buffalo. By the 1840’s the buffalo had either died out in the Red River area or had moved west to areas with fewer people.
In 1869 the Hudson’s Bay Company sold Rupert’s Land to the government of Canada for $1.5 million. There was reason for concern among the Métis.

Métis Concerns:
- Would they be assimilated by English-speaking Protestants?
- Would they have a place in the government?
- Would they keep their language and religion?
- Would they keep their farms and way of life?
Settlement of the West

- Canadian government began to encourage European settlement in the west (including Red River)
- Look at Points of View on Page 181
- In 1869, the government sent surveyors to Red River. They divided the land differently than the Métis. (page 182)
Louis Riel
1844-1885

Manitoba
Riel to the Rescue!

- The Métis turned to Louis Riel for help since he was educated, spoke three languages (English, French, and Cree) and believed strongly that Métis rights should be protected.
- He quickly drove the surveyors out.
Thomas Scott

- Thomas Scott was an English-speaking Protestant settler living in Red River.
- He did not support the Métis and threatened Louis Riel. Scott was arrested and later shot.
- The people of English Canada were angry with the Métis. They wanted revenge!
- The French Canadians saw the Métis as defenders of the French ways.
#4 - Creation of Manitoba:

- The Métis Provisional Government in Red River sent representatives to Ottawa with its Bill of Rights.
- John A. Macdonald agreed to most of the things on the list.
- In July 1870, Manitoba joined Confederation and passed the Manitoba Act. (Page 185)
The Manitoba Act

- The new province would be able to have:
  - its own provincial government
  - the ability to keep its French and English languages
  - the right to two school systems (Catholic and Protestant)
  - the protection of Métis land
  - pardons for people involved in the resistance
In Reality…

- Everything appeared to be going well, however things were not as good as they seemed.
- Many Métis were punished by Macdonald’s soldiers rather than receiving pardon.
- Louis Riel felt threatened and fled to the United States for safety.
After Manitoba joined Confederation, the Métis and First Nations people were supposed to get land and other benefits from the Canadian government.

Many moved westward in the hope of starting a new life but were not satisfied.

Gabriel Dumont, the military general for the Métis, urged Louis Riel to return to Canada.
Northwest Resistance of 1885

- The Métis sent a Bill of Rights to Ottawa, stating that they wanted land issues resolved, two new provinces created, and food rations.
- When the government did not respond the Métis felt forced to fight for their rights.
- The Resistance of 1885 ended when supplies ran out.
Louis Riel’s Punishment

- Riel was sentenced to death for treason - the betrayal of one’s country.
- The Prime Minister did not stop the execution because of Ontario (English Canada) wanting Riel to pay for the execution of Thomas Scott.
- Quebec (French Canada) was upset with Macdonald’s decision and felt betrayed by their Prime Minister.
In the End…

- Some of the Métis demands were finally met, but it was already too late.
- As a result of the Resistance, the Métis were forced to stay on small reserves and the food rations stopped.
- At this time, there were only ~100 buffalo left in all of Canada.
“Had I been born on the banks of the Saskatchewan, I would myself have shouldered a musket to fight against the neglect of the government and the shameless greed of speculators.”

Sir Wilfred Laurier, future Prime Minister
ASSIGNMENTS

1. Tell the story of The Metis using pictures & brief summary. You can do it in a comic strip format.

This should include:

- Red River Resistance (180) *Rupert’s Land*
- Creation of Manitoba (185)
- Métis moving (186)
- Métis Uprising (187)
- Métis surrender (Louis Riel) and aftermath (191)

DUE:
CHECKLIST FOR PROJECT

___ Need 2 pictures/visuals for each EVENT
___ 5 Events Must be evident
___ Hand in On Time
___ Use 8 x 14 poster paper
___ Creativity (Color, Font, Pictures)
___ Include headings for EVERY event
___ Same format as a comic strip: gutter space, 10 frames, title at the top of page, summary for EVERY event on back of page.

TOTAL: /7
EXAM

- Chapter 8, “The Metis” exam will be on…

- YOUR JOBS:
  1. Study for Exam
  2. Complete Assignment for this Chapter
The Government Tightens Its Grip