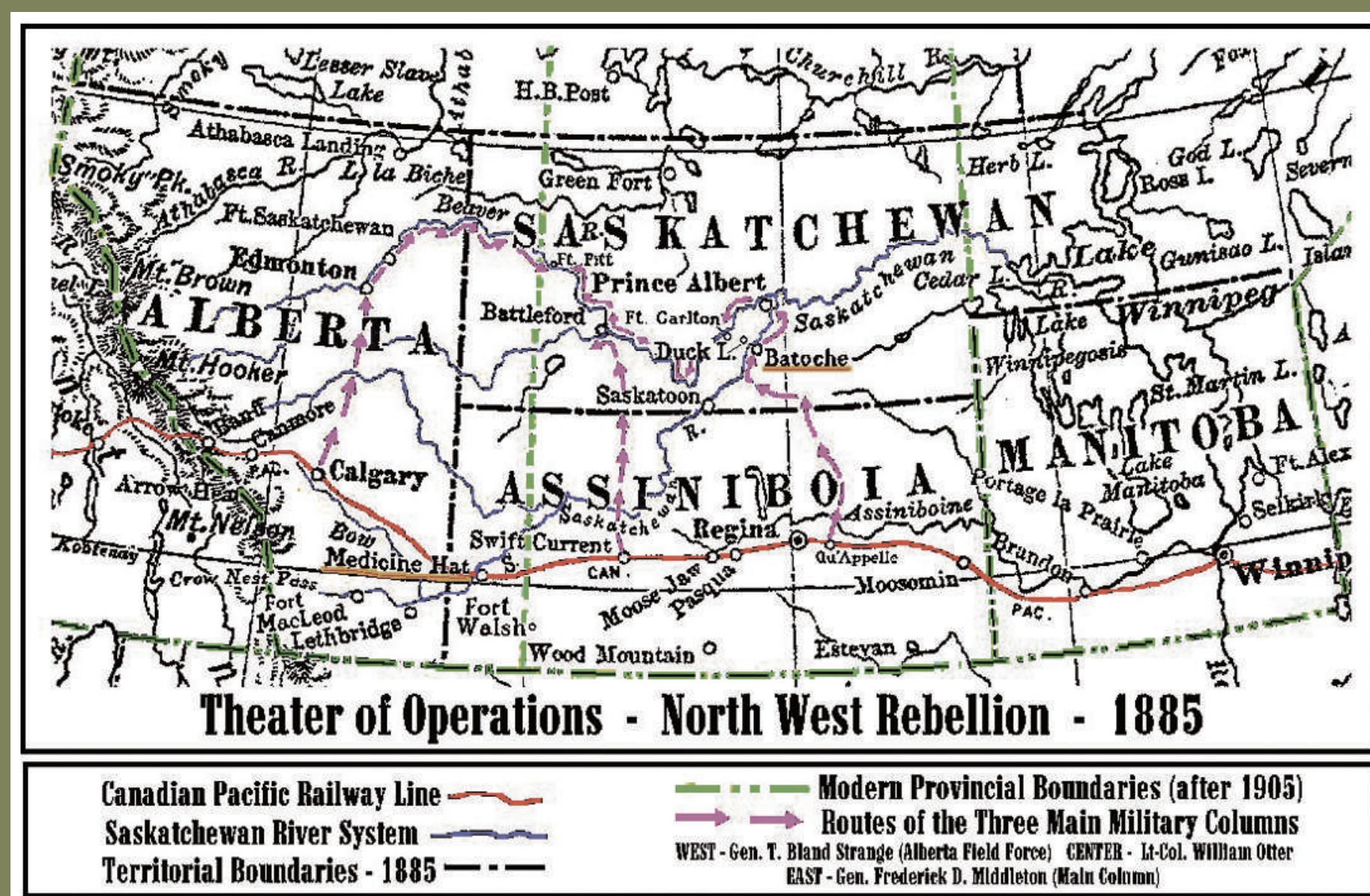


THE NORTHWEST REBELLION 1885

Some fifteen years after the Red River rebellion the same forces were at play in the settlement of Batoche at a bend in the South Saskatchewan River, Northwest Territories. Government surveyors were redrawing boundaries and forcing Metis farmers off their land.

Letters were written to Ottawa asking for help for the Metis farmers. When nothing was done a delegation was sent to Montana and successfully convinced Louis Riel to return and lead the Metis people in a second revolt against the Government of Canada.

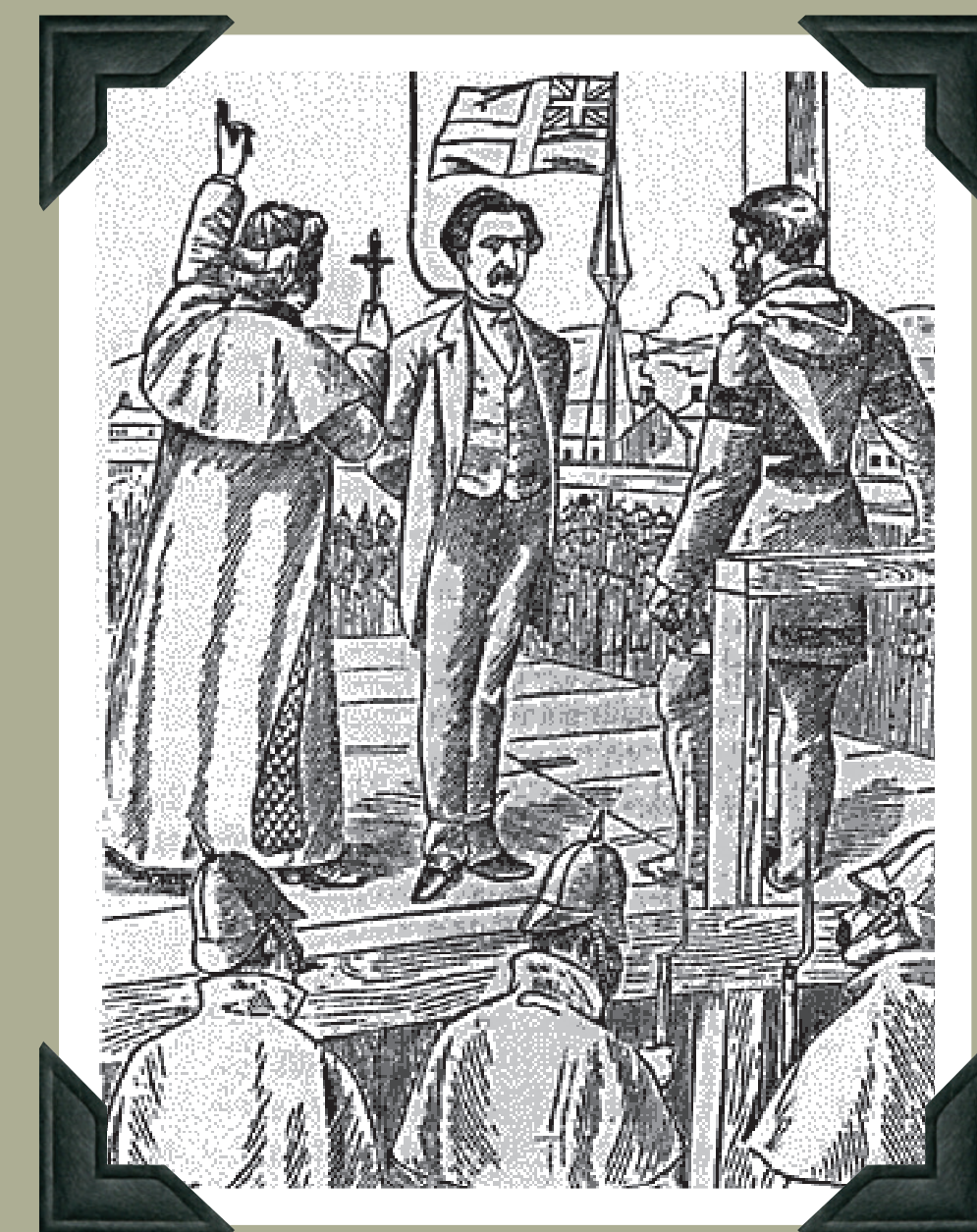


At first, Riel took the political route. He sent a petition to Ottawa outlining the grievances of the Metis and white settlers. But faced with continued government indifference, his tactics became more militant. In March 1885, Riel formed a provisional government and a small military force. Armed conflict followed as Riel's followers and government troops clashed. This was the first time Canadian troops conducted a large scale military operation without the support of British regulars.

Major Henry Smith of Cobourg (*see the Fenian Raids*) played an important role in the defeat of Louis Riel and the rebellion. Major Smith commanded C Company of the Royal Canadian Regiment in battle and was Mentioned in Despatches for his gallantry and leadership under fire during the engagement at the Battle of Fish Creek. Major Smith and his troops met the enemy head on and drove them back from their prepared defensive positions.

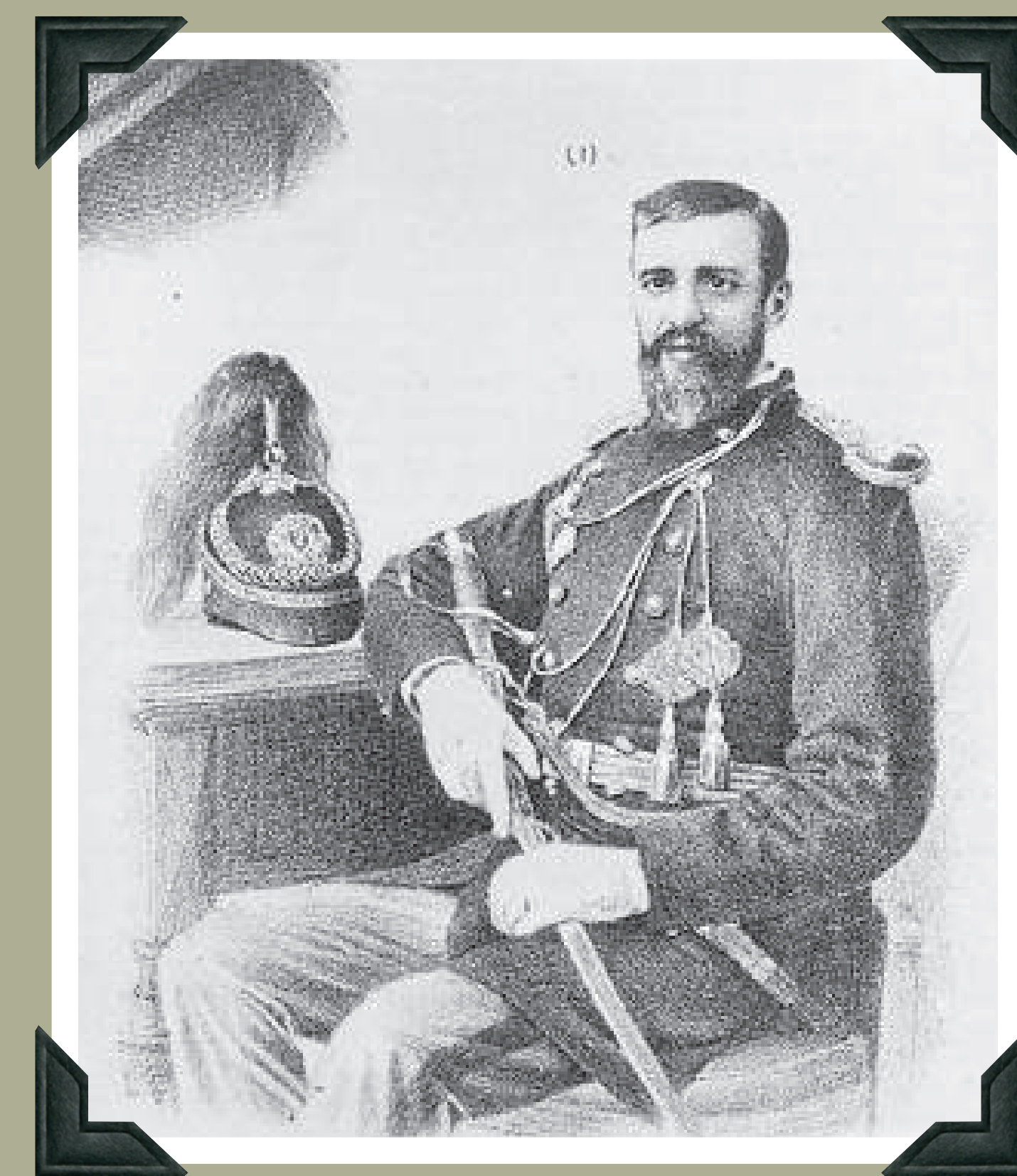
Charles Arkol Boulton (*see the Red River Rebellion*) was in Winnipeg in 1885 and offered his services to the army when he heard about this rebellion. Boulton raised two troops of Scouts (aka. Boulton's Scouts) who also played a major role at the Battle at Fish Creek and led the troops to the Battle of Batoche. Boulton remained in the area pursuing Chief Big Bear until the Chief's surrender.

Port Hope also contributed a major player in the Northwest Rebellion. The Hon. Arthur Trefusis Heneage Williams, a businessman and farmer, represented Durham East in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from 1867 to 1874 and in the Canadian House of Commons as a Conservative member from 1879 to 1885. As Lieutenant Colonel Williams he led the Midland Battalion in the Battle of Batoche. Colonel Williams was the only nationally known figure to die in the Northwest Campaign and his body was brought home in state. A huge funeral was held in Port Hope where a statue still stands in his honour.



Following his capture Riel was tried for high treason. Despite continuing questions about his sanity, Riel was found guilty and hanged.

Boulton went on to write a book entitled "Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellion". He was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 1881 and died in Manitoba in 1899.



Charles Boulton

THE RED RIVER REBELLION 1868-70

In 1869 the new Canadian Government purchased Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company and appointed as governor English-speaking William McDougall. He was opposed by the French-speaking, mostly Métis, inhabitants of the Red River Settlement. When McDougall sent out land surveyors who redrew boundaries and property lines forcing the Metis off their lands, the Metis, under the leadership of Louis Riel, proceeded to set up their own provisional government, to which they invited an equal number of Anglophone representatives. Riel undertook to negotiate directly with the Canadian government.

However, by late 1869 a small anti-Riel group had formed under the title of the Canadian Party. Major Charles Arkoll Boulton of Cobourg (*see Northwest Rebellion*), son of D'Arcy Edward Boulton (*see Fenian Raids*), was one of their leaders. While Boulton had served with the Cobourg Volunteer Rifle Company and been in action during the Fenian Raids, he was not in military service during this uprising, but had come with the Canadian survey party.

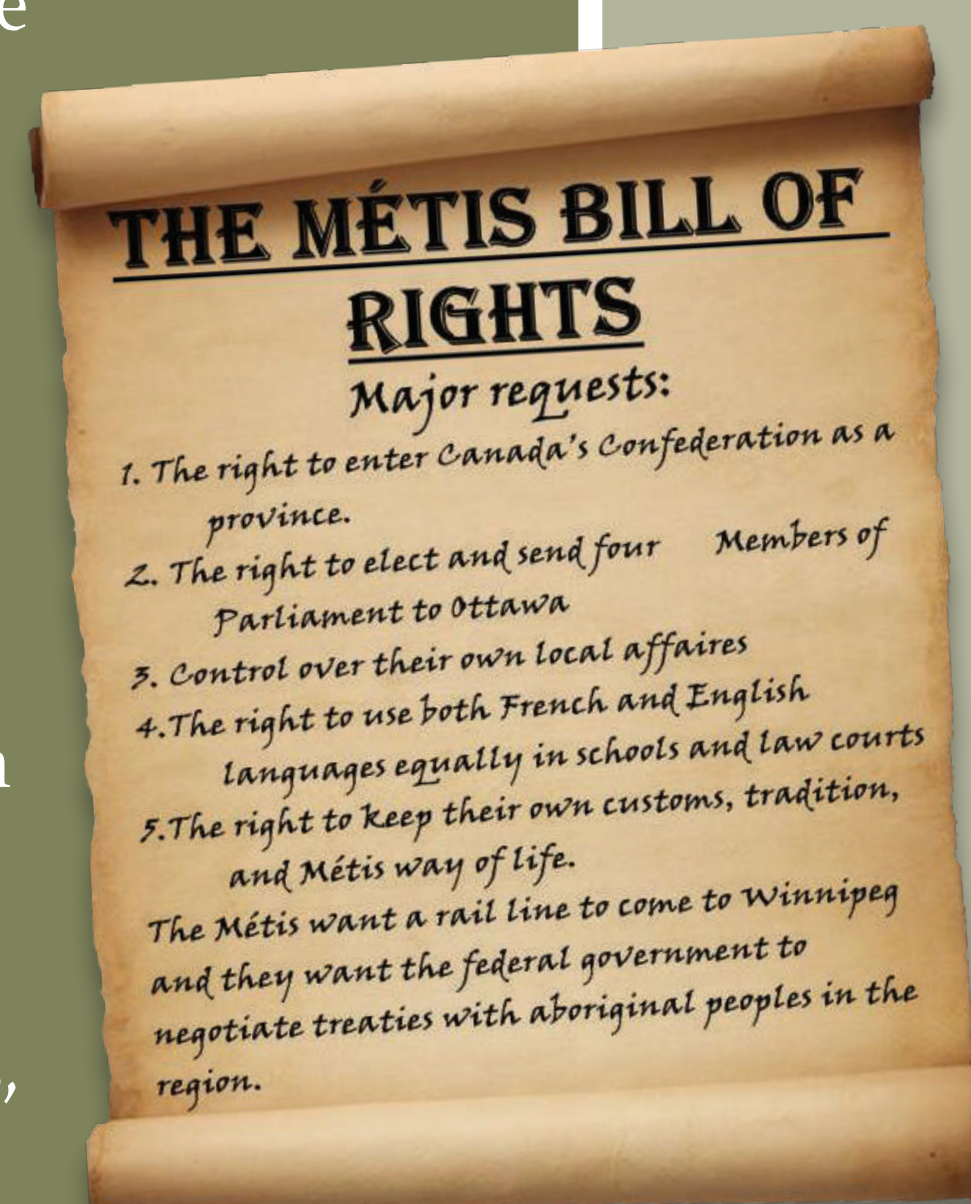
On February 10, about fifty of the group, including Boulton, were captured by the Metis following an aborted attempt to overthrow the provisional government. Boulton was sentenced to be executed. However, pressure from Red River residents to have him spared had a positive effect and he was later released to return to Ontario.

However, Thomas Scott, a particularly rancorous member of the Canadian Party, was not so fortunate. In consenting to his execution Riel is reported to have commented: ***"I have done three good things since I have commenced; I have spared Boulton's life at your instance, I pardoned Gaddy, and now I shall shoot Scott."***

The Canadian Government's response was to send a force under the leadership of Colonel Garnet Wolseley. Not allowed to travel through United States territory, the expedition has been called *"among the most arduous in history. Over 1,000 men had to transport all their provisions and weaponry including cannon over hundreds of miles of wilderness. At numerous portages, corduroy roads had to be constructed. All this was endured for over two months, along with the summer heat and the inevitable plagues of blackflies and mosquitoes."*

When Wolseley arrived at Upper Fort Gary, Riel and his supporters left for the safety of the United States and the fort was taken without bloodshed. Among those accompanying the Wolseley Expedition were four men from Cobourg: Joe Thomson, Harry Pentland, Harry Gravely, and William R. Whitelaw.

The negotiations initiated by Riel were successful to the extent that in 1870 an act was passed allowing the Red River Settlement to enter Confederation as the Province of Manitoba. However, many of the provisions to protect the interest of the Metis were ignored.



Louis Riel



The Red River Rebellion ultimately failed and Louis Riel was exiled to the USA.

But that is not the end of the story...