

“Canada A People’s History: Taking The West”

The Land Of Discontent

- The Cree Chief, Big Bear has always opposed the treaties. Now his worst fears have come true. The buffalo have been decimated, American fur traders, plains Indians and white hunters all helped slaughter the four million buffalo which once roamed the Canadian prairie. The Plains Indians now depend on government _____. But in the House of Commons there is little sympathy for their plight and a demand that they work for their food.
- Rations are continually reduced and distributed every other day. A policy the Indian agents call, “feed them one day, _____ them the next.” Sir John A. Macdonald approves.
- Between 1880 and 1885, an estimated _____ of the Plains Indians die of malnutrition and disease.
- The main threat is Crowfoot. His warriors have tried _____ as the government wants, but without tools and support promised in the treaties it is hopeless.
- The Metis – few of them hold title to their land. Now government _____ are cutting up their farm plots. They have seen this before; it’s what caused the Red River Resistance.
- Conditions are ripe for an explosion in the Northwest: dashed hopes of the settlers, starvation and desperation among the Indians, and now the catalyst that will transform discontent into _____, the return of Louis Riel.
- Riel’s petition arrives in Ottawa in December and is promptly _____. Macdonald doesn’t realize that he has passed up his last opportunity to prevent rebellion.
- Duck Lake, a few miles from Batoche, two hundred of Riel’s Metis and a handful of Indians battle a column of one hundred mounted _____ and civilian volunteers. The battle is not planned, but when heavily armed police and Metis fighters run into each other on the same

road, a clash is inevitable. And when it is over, three police and nine civilian volunteers lie dead in the snow.

- But the victory is costly. The settlers have never supported armed rebellion. They terminate their alliance with the Metis. Riel is now alone with his prayers and his hopes that the _____ will join him.
- Back in Ottawa, Macdonald is calling out the militia and planning to use his new _____ to rush them to the west.

The Siege

- Macdonald's biggest worry is Crowfoot and his well-armed Blackfoot warriors. Riel has been sending messages asking them to join his rebellion. Orders are given to immediately increase the food _____.
- But the next flashpoint of the Northwest Rebellion is not Edmonton. It's an isolated settlement one hundred miles down the North Saskatchewan called Frog Lake. Big Bear and his band are camped nearby. The old chief had urged his people not to join the rebellion, believing that only _____ would protect his people. But now he is undermined.
- A warrior's council takes control of the band, then rides into Frog Lake to demand food. When the local Indian agent refuses, he is shot. The warriors loot the settlement ignoring Big Bear's pleas; they _____ nine settlers, including two priests.
- The murders at Frog Lake electrify the country. Newspapers print lurid and wildly exaggerated accounts of a massive Indian uprising. From Halifax to Winnipeg, young men eager to defend their country rush to the drill halls. The volunteer soldiers of Canada's first national _____ march to the railroad stations anticipating epic battles and great victories.
- In less than a fortnight, militia units from Ontario and Quebec arrive in Winnipeg on troop trains hastily assembled by the CPR. Macdonald's railway is proving its worth. Far to the south of

Batoche, one crucial question remains: will Crowfoot join Riel's rebellion? There are chiefs who are ready to fight. But Crowfoot remembers the throngs of white men he had seen in Winnipeg. He knows that _____ of soldiers are coming and he had been given more food rations. Crowfoot makes up his mind... to remain loyal to the Queen.

Batoche

- In command of the troops is General Frederick Middleton. He was a former _____ officer with a typical disdain for colonial troops made worse when he watched their target practice.
- Middleton moves cautiously. He sends one column of troops to Calgary then north to protect Edmonton and to hunt for Big Bear. A smaller column is sent to relieve Fort Battleford where settlers have taken refuge fearing an attack by Chief Poundmaker's warriors. Middleton leads the main force on a 200 mile march to Batoche. Gabriel Dumont, the _____ military commander, is waiting for him.
- The first skirmish is near a coolie called Fish Creek. Hidden in the dense thickets, Dumont launches an _____. ... Despite superior firepower, Middleton's troops cannot break through the Metis' defences.
- Poundmaker's camp is only a few days ride from Batoche. His Cree warriors had fought off a surprise attack by Middleton's troops sent to protect Battleford. But Poundmaker had refused to go on the _____.
- In the first week of May, the Canadians reach the outskirts of Batoche. Once again the embattled Metis hold out against superior numbers and overwhelming firepower, including the first use of the _____ gun. ... Finally after three days of fierce resistance, the Metis are overwhelmed.
- The Metis wanted nothing more than recognition of their _____ as citizens of Canada's northwest. Their hope ended at Batoche in tragedy and degradation.

- The Northwest Rebellion has been crushed. Three days later Louis Riel _____.

The Trial

- Sir John A. Macdonald has no intention of creating a grandstand for the man who has led two armed uprisings. He wants Riel _____. That cannot be guaranteed under Canadian law so he resorts to an ancient British charge of high treason. It prescribes only one penalty, death.
- Riel's lawyers argue that a man who calls himself, "a prophet of God", who wants to choose a new pope and move the seat of the Catholic Church to Canada is clearly _____ and therefore not responsible for his actions. Riel insists otherwise.
- It takes the jury barely an hour to reach a verdict on Riel - guilty with a recommendation for mercy. But on August 3rd 1885, the judge ignores their plea and sentences him to _____.