

- By 1884 the Métis were losing patience with the Canadian government. They weren't part of the treaty process & again feared their rights would be ignored.
- The Métis sent petitions asking the Canadian government to protect their land rights. But the government wanted to sell the farmland instead to help pay for the CPR.

#### The Government's Agenda

- As railway costs rose, the government slashed the budgets of the Indian Dept. The government didn't give promised aid to the FN people it struck treaties with.
- Instead, they were dependent on government handouts, by 1884 many aboriginal people were facing starvation. The government kept control by refusing assistance to "difficult Indians".

#### Louis Riel Returns

- 1884 – the Métis send a delegation to Montana to meet with Louis Riel. He decided to return to help the Métis. Riel returned with peaceful intentions, but his presence alerted the government to the possibility of another rebellion.
- Late 1884 – a European farmer **Will Jackson** helped Riel draft the "Métis Bill of Rights" & sent a petition to Ottawa. It reflected their frustrations & their desire to be treated as equals.
- Lawrence Clark became a Gov. informant & spread disinformation in the community raising tensions. The Métis sent another petition & unfortunately picked Clark to represent them. He returns (falsely) saying the government had sent a force of 500 to arrest Riel.
- The government figured that if war broke out the public would view spending money to finish the railway as politically acceptable.
- March 19, 1885: Riel addresses the Métis, says the government is determined to make war & declares, "*Justice commands us to take up arms*".

#### Northwest Resistance of 1885

- **Duck Lake, March 26**: NWMP at Ft. Carlton rode out to meet a Métis force. Two Métis were shot, 12 NWMP killed, 25 wounded.
- The government quickly mobilizes 5000 troops to send to the area. They split into different groups afraid the FN in the area may resist.
- **Fish Creek, April 24**: fewer than 300 Métis stop a Canadian force of 1600.
- **Battle of Batoche, May 9-12**: 900 militia attacked 250 Métis, the Métis held on until they ran out of ammunition. After this Riel was captured and Dumont escaped to the USA.

#### Trial of Riel – July 1885

- Riel was taken to Regina and charged with High Treason. Regina was carefully picked, six white Protestant men were selected as jurors.
- Riel's lawyers wanted him to plead not guilty due to insanity, he refused. During the trial Riel blamed the Can. government for the troubles but he was convicted.
- Macdonald refused all appeals quoting, "*He shall hang, though every dog in Quebec shall bark in his favour.*" Louis Riel was executed by hanging on November 16, 1885.

#### Aftermath of the Uprising

- Few FN people had actively participated but many were arrested for treason. Leaders like **Poundmaker & Big Bear** were unjustly imprisoned.
- FNs would be confined to their reserves and isolated from other communities.
- The Métis would face decades of discrimination and prejudice.