

Métis Nation

People like the McDougalls, the Fiddlers and the Dumonts have made themselves part of a very vital community. These were the people who settled the area, people who had been betrayed at the Red River, were forced out, trekked across the Prairies to the Saskatchewan River and settled in the communities of Batoche, Duck Lake and St. Laurent.

The Métis had no reason to trust the Government of the day. When the Government showed that it was following the same course as it did at the Red River, even Louis Riel wavered in his determination to strive for peace. For 100 years the Métis have fought to stay culturally and ethnically alive. In 1982 they won a battle that had escaped them at the Red River and at Batoche. They won recognition of their rights as a founding people, a founding people who were of mixed blood of the First Nations and of the so-called founding nations of France and the British Isles.

The names that appear in records of the Red River and the Batoche skirmish appear along with others in records of their fight to make those rights part of the mosaic of Canada. It was with a great deal of pride that two weeks ago I watched Mederic McDougall, accompanied by his wife Maryanne Lepine, receive the Order of Canada for service rendered to his people and to Canada. The winning of the recognition of the Métis rights was a political victory won by people like Mederic and many others.

This resolution, should it receive the support of this House, would help to erase the long and widely established discrimination against the Métis people. I commend the Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner) for his persistence in bringing forward the motion on the four points which acknowledged the contribution of the Métis people and their right to defend and develop their culture and heritage as well as to have a basis for self-determination. Those points acknowledge the significant contribution of the Métis people to the development of the West and the creation of Canada. It is a small point, but important for the people who, for 100 years, have fought to have that matter recognized, and to recognize Louis David Riel as the founder of Manitoba and the father of Confederation.

Again, who can deny that his original provisional Government in Manitoba was the original Government that brought Manitoba into Confederation? They have fought for it strongly and well, and have won the first step. This House can do little more than acquiesce in that request. We should support self-government and a land base for the Métis. They have long sought self-determination, and only by such an action can they fulfil that requirement.

Louis Riel was one of the first reformers in western Canada. He was followed by others who formed organizations like the wheat pools, the farmers' union and the CCF. Those movements were allowed to develop and to prosper. After 100 years is it not time to assist the Métis to develop and prosper as well?

• (1710)

Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to partake in this debate. I want to congratulate all those Hon. Members who I believe have spoken exceedingly well in this debate.

All of us in the House should applaud and agree with the motion in the name of the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner). My colleague, the Hon. Member for Mission—Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain), pointed out with pride that he is a Métis descendant himself. I would encourage Hon. Members to read his speech because I believe it is an excellent description of Métis history as given by a Member of Parliament who, like Louis Riel, is a Métis.

The Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy), the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Mr. Scott), the Member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Desjardins) and the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) gave excellent speeches.

I agree with much of what has been said. In 10 minutes it is difficult to deal with this subject which is of such importance to all of us who were born in Manitoba and brought up in that province—

[*Translation*]

—with the memory of Louis Riel present everywhere. As you know, Mr. Speaker, he was buried near Winnipeg in the city of St. Boniface, and I think most Manitobans admire Louis Riel as the founder of our province and, in fact, of Canada.

[*English*]

It might interest you to know, Mr. Speaker, that I am holding the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which has about half a page dealing with Louis Riel. The first entry indicates that he is “a Canadian agitator”. While the passage contains some good comments about him, it goes on to state: “His own rashness and the ineptitude of Canadian politicians and officials brought on the uprising of 1885”.

Let us turn to *The Canadian Encyclopedia* which was published recently. One wonders if one is talking about the same person. George Stanley pays Louis Riel great tribute and calls him a founder of Manitoba. He presents the uprising in 1870 sympathetically and, I suggest, accurately, from an historical point of view.

I believe this passage deals with Louis Riel and his followers in a way that I believe all western Canadians would now find acceptable. I might point out that Thomas Scott who was ultimately killed, attempted to arouse Scottish settlers in Manitoba. As someone of Scottish origin, I am sorry if any of my ancestors were involved in that attempt by Scott.

The final entry on Louis Riel in the *Canadian Encyclopedia* reads:

In the West, the immediate result was to depress the lot of the Métis.

That was after 1885. It goes on: