

FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE
ON
ABORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

REJECTION OF RIEL PARDON

METIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

Ottawa
March 15-16, 1983

METIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

WE, THE DELEGATES TO THIS FIRST FIRST
METIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, MARCH 14, 1983,
UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSE AND ADOPT AS ITS
OWN STATEMENT, THE LETTER REJECTING A
PARDON FOR LOUIS RIEL AS REFLECTED IN
THE ATTACHED LETTER.


PER
CLEM CHARTIER

METIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

ASSOCIATION OF METIS & NON-STATUS INDIANS OF SASKATCHEWAN



March 2, 1983

To All Members of Parliament and Senate of Canada

As the question of Louis Riel's activities a century ago continue to mount, the situation of the Métis Peoples of Canada remains unaltered. That Louis Riel did not sacrifice his life in vain is reflected in the continued struggle of the Métis. The Constitutional Rights fought for in 1885 are the very same being addressed today.

Recent attempts to gain Louis Riel a pardon are unequivocally opposed by our Association. The action of the Métis in 1885 in defending the National Rights and homeland of our people against the oppressive expansionism of the occupying forces was totally justifiable.

We are not interested in negative symbolism. If Parliament is sincere in correcting past injustices, then the Rights for which our people died should now be entrenched in the Constitution Act, 1982, along with the return of our lands. It is only on this basis that an apology will be accepted. In addition, we are only open to discussing an acquittal of the charges against Louis Riel, not a pardon.

On another front, there are currently a number of plans by various segments of the Canadian public for activities to mark the Centenary of the armed conflict between the Canadian/British military and the Métis at Batoche. To the Métis of Saskatchewan, unless the Rights to our homeland and Self-Government are constitutionally recognized, 1985 will have no more meaning than 1983, other than being an additional two years of continued oppression, genocide and ethnocide.

If that must be the case, Parliament and the people of Canada can celebrate 1985, if they can find anything noble in an oppressive act of a majority against a minority, particularly an Indigenous Population whose Rights and lands have been usurped by a colonial process.

To All Members of Parliament and Senate of Canada
Page 2
March 2, 1983

However, being cognizant of the growing World public order with respect to National Rights and the principle of Self-Determination, coupled with Canada's leading role in this area, we are confident that the Political will exists to rectify these injustices and give expression to the Rights of the Métis.

Yours for Indigenous Freedom

Clem Chartier

Clem Chartier on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Association of Métis & Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan who are:

Jim Sinclair, President
Clem Chartier, Vice-President
Jim Durocher, Provincial Treasurer
Frank Tomkins, Provincial Secretary

Janet Holmgren, Area Director
Angus Deschambeault, Area Director
Don Ross, Area Director
Roberta Kelly, Area Director
Rod Bishop, Area Director
Jim Favel, Area Director
Norman Hansen, Area Director
Napoleon LaFontaine, Area Director
Morley Norton, Area Director
Alvin Campeau, Area Director
Edwin Pelletier, Area Director

/nb