

The he failed to
complete his religious
studies



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Metis were partly french and partly indian. Their leader was called Louis riel. Following the Union of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, trading had been reorganized in order to reduce expenses.

Since there was no longer competition in the fur trade, it was unnecessary to have two or more posts serving a single trading district. For this reason, some posts had been closed and the number of brigades reduced. This reorganization had led to some unemployment among Metis who for years had been working in the fur trade. The Hudson Bay Company had attempted to assist these men by encouraging them to engage in farming in what is now South Manitoba. A few families took to agriculture, but most of the metis found it difficult. To them, the excitement and the adventure of the buffalo hunt held more appeal than farming.

Hundreds of Metis were content to earn a living by hunting buffalo, making pemmican or finding employment as freight drivers. After a while Canada bought Rupertsland from Hudson Bay Company. When the Metis heard this they were alarmed. They feared their religion, their language, their lands and their old, free way of* life.

They had known for some time that Canada was busy constructing a colonists highway from Lake Superior to the Red River. The situation became tense surveyors were sent into the flow of settlers, and it was considered a wise move to have the surveying well under way before settlement began in earnest. It was decided to use a system or land survey similar to that used in the western part of the United States.

Townships were to be divided into thirty-six sections, each containing one square mile or 640 acres. The sections were then to be divided into, the quarter-section was thought to be enough land for each family settling in the North West. (An interesting aspect of the survey system was the plan of the setting aside two sections in each township for the future support of education. The idea to sell these sections at a later date and use the money for the construction of schools.) When the survey began, friction occurred in those areas where the French-speaking Metis had settled along the river, occupying long narrow strips in the manner common in New France. Attempts were made by the surveyors to avoid disturbing the pattern, but in some cases the survey lines crossed the narrow holdings, leading the Metis to believe their land was being taken away from them.

Louis Riel, Mon April 5, 1868 Louis Riel was the leader of the Metis. He was a black-bearded, handsome young man, the son of the leader of a minor Metis revolt in 1849 against the Hudson's Bay Company. Born in the Red River region in 1844, Riel had been chosen as a possible candidate for the priesthood and had studied at the Jesuit College de Montreal. However, he failed to complete his religious studies and returned to the Red River in 1868, looking for employment. His powers of eloquence and his hot-tempered nature soon made him an outspoken defender of the Metis.