



1870

THE RED RIVER COLONY IN 1870

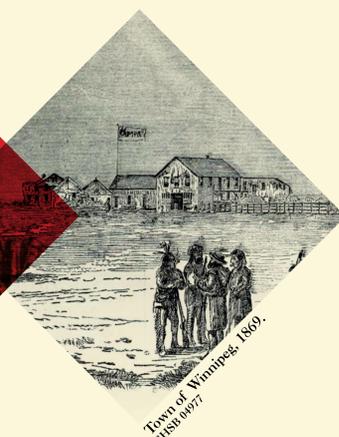
The census of 1870 provides insight into the population at the time: 6,240 of the census respondents self-declared as Catholic, 5,720 as Protestant, approximately 5,700 as French-speaking Métis, 4,080 as English-speaking Métis, and 560 as First Nations.

Therefore, approximately 10,000 of the 12,000 inhabitants were Métis. Many of them were multilingual, speaking fluent French and English as well as one or more Indigenous languages, primarily Ojibwe, Sioux, Cree or Michif.

Canada, on the other hand, counted 3.4 million inhabitants in 1867. This disparity could partially explain why it didn't seem to be concerned with inquiring about the requests and needs of the Red River Colony.



Métis cart. SHSB 4976



Town of Winnipeg, 1869. SHSB 04977

BISON HUNTING: A MÉTIS WAY OF LIFE

The Métis hunted bison, which was vital for the population and led them to travel for months at a time in search of herds. The structural organization of hunting camps was based on that of the military, but officials were chosen democratically during meetings prior to the hunt. This ensured consensus within the group and compliance with the rules.

Since this hunt was crucial for the survival of the Métis, anyone who didn't follow the rules was promptly judged by these officials, and there were significant consequences.



Métis with their dogs. SHSB 15289

Bison hunting. SHSB 15309