

Riel's Council 1869



Back row: left to right, Charles Larocque, Pierre Delorme, Thomas Bunn, François Xavier Pagée, Ambroise Lépine¹, Jean Baptiste Tourond, Thomas Spence; centre row: Pierre Poitras, John Bruce, Louis Riel, William Bernard O'Donoghue, François Dauphinais; front row : Hugh F. O'Lone and Paul Proulx.

John Bruce. (1831-1893)

John Bruce, a Metis carpenter, was president of the Provisional Government of Red River in 1869. Born in 1837, (probably at Ile à la Crosse) his parents were Pierre Bruce and Marguerite Desrosiers. He married Angélique Gaudry (Vaudry, Beaudry) the daughter of Pierre Gaudry and Marie-Anne Hughes.

He has been described as tall and dark-featured with a sober looking face. He spoke English, French and several Indian languages. He often worked as a legal advocate for the Francophone Metis. He was reportedly fluent in English, French and a number of Indian languages. On October 1869, Bruce was elected President of the Metis National Committee, the first move to resist the annexation by Canada. He resigned in December 1869 when the provisional government was formed. He did serve as the Commissioner of Public Works in Riel's Provisional Government. He was appointed a judge and magistrate by Archibald the first

¹ Now identified as Andre Beauchemin. See Norma Jean Hall for a discussion of this photograph at: <http://hallnjean.wordpress.com/sailors-worlds/the-red-river-resistance-and-the-creation-of-manitoba/>

Lieutenant Governor. After appearing as a witness against Ambroise Lépine in his trial for the murder of Thomas Scott, Bruce and his family moved to Leroy, in what is now North Dakota.

Reference

Ronaghan, N.E. Allen. "John Bruce." Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XII (1891-1900). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990: 131-133.

Thomas Bunn, M.L.A. (1830-1875)

Thomas Bunn was the first son of Dr. John Bunn and Catherine Thomas, both Metis. He was raised in the parish of St. Paul (Middlechurch) and educated at the Red River Academy. He married Isabella Clouston in 1854 and Rachel Harriot in 1859.

In 1868, he was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia having previously served as clerk of the Council and the Quarterly Court of Assiniboia from 1865-1869. Bunn was made a delegate to the Council from St. Clements in 1869. He was a supporter of Riel and chaired the famous open-air meetings of January 1870 when Donald A. Smith spoke to the Red River population. Bunn then served on the committee arranging the elections to the Convention of Forty and he himself became one of the delegates to the Convention representing St. Clements. He served as Secretary of State in the Provisional Government. In Manitoba's first election of December 1870, Bunn was elected as MPP from St. Clements. Bunn was called to the bar in 1871 and was clerk for the first General Quarterly Court in May of 1871.

François Dauphinais. (b. 1815)

François was born January 1, 1815, the son of Michel Genthon dit Dauphinais and Victorie Ouellette. He was a French Half-Breed who served as the St. François Xavier delegate to the 1869 Convention and then became vice-president of the Provisional Government, 8 January 1870. He was later appointed to Manitoba's Legislative Council (Upper House) in 1871. Dauphinais was married to Françoise Paul and later Marguerite Morin (1882). During the post 1870 "reign of terror" he, Peter Poitras and Pierre Pagée were arrested and jailed by Wolseley's troops.

Pierre Delorme, M.L.A., M.P. (1832-1912)

Pierre was born October 1, 1832 in St. Boniface, the son of Joseph Fafard Delorme and Josephine Bellisle. From 1852-56, he worked for the HBC at Swan River as a middleman. In September 1854, he married Adélaïde Millet dit Beauchemin and in 1857 they bought lot 21 at Pointe-Coupée (St. Adolphe) where they built a log-framed two-story house. They raised five sons and two daughters. Pierre farmed, traded and ran a boarding house for Pembina Trail travelers and later operated a cart brigade to northern Saskatchewan.

During the late 1860s, Louis Riel and the other Metis political leaders started meeting at Delorme's home to strategize on their response to the planned transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada. Delorme took an active part in the Provisional Government and in 1870 was elected to the Convention of Forty as the member from Pointe-Coupée. In the first provincial election of December 1870 he was elected as MLA for St. Norbert. He was elected as a federal MP in 1871, for Provencher riding, defeated in the next election (1874) and re-elected in December of 1878

by acclamation. As a Captain of the Metis he captured Major Boulton and others when they attempted to take Upper Fort Garry on behalf of the Canadian Party. In 1871 he was elected a Captain of the Metis from Pointe-Coupée to defend Manitoba against Fenian invasion from the United States.

He contested the 1870 election, running as a Conservative and won the seat of St. Norbert South, which he held until defeated in 1874. In 1871 he ran federally in the Provencher riding and became one of Manitoba's first members of the House of Commons. From 1873 to 1875 he served on the Council of the North-West Territories. He nominated Riel for the seat in 1872, but it was withdrawn so he could nominate George-Étienne Cartier, who had been defeated in his Montreal riding. Cartier was elected by acclamation. After Cartier's death in 1883, Delorme was again active in attempts to nominate Riel and have him elected for Provencher.

In 1878, Premier Norquay named Delorme Minister of Agriculture and President of the Executive Council. In the provincial election of that year, he was elected by acclamation for the riding of St. Norbert. Upon retiring from politics, he returned to St. Adolphe as a farmer and businessman. He argued for Riel's amnesty and was deeply involved with the Metis lands issue. (Contributed by Fred Shore.)

Charles Larocque. (b. 1815)

Charles was second child of Charles Larocque and Catherine Macon. He married Cecile Laberge. They lived at St. Boniface and had nine children. Charles served on Riel's Red River Council in 1870.

Ambroise-Didyme Lépine. (1840-1923)

This Metis leader was the son of Jean-Baptiste Bérard dit Lépine and Julia Henry, a Saskatchewan Metis who was the daughter of the famous Alexander Henry and his Saulteaux wife. He was the brother of Jean-Baptiste Jr. and Maxime Lépine. Ambroise was born in St. Boniface in 1840. He was married to Cecile Marion, the daughter of Metis leader Narcisse Marion. He took his education at St. Boniface College. Lépine represented St. Boniface at the 1870 Convention of Forty.

Lépine was Louis Riel's Adjutant General during the Red River Resistance of 1869-70. His military leadership amongst the Metis was attributed to his cool demeanor and prodigious physical strength. He served in the provisional government as military commander and presided at the war council, which condemned Thomas Scott, though he was opposed to the execution.

In St. Vital, he was arrested for the murder of Scott. During October of 1875, he was tried and found guilty. He was sentenced to be hung but Lord Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, commuted his sentence to two years in jail and his civil rights were revoked indefinitely.

A long awaited amnesty was offered to both Riel and Lépine on condition that they both leave the country for five years. Lépine decided to serve out his sentence, contrary to Riel. On February 11, 1875, the Prime Minister moved that:

...full amnesty should be granted to all persons concerned in the North-West troubles for all acts committed by them during the said troubles, saving only L. Riel, A. D. Lépine, and W.B. O' Donoghue, that in the opinion of this house it would be proper...that a like

amnesty should be granted to L. Riel and A.D. Lépine conditional on five years banishment from Her Majesty's Dominions.

Ambroise Lépine was permitted to settle near Batoche, Saskatchewan and then near Forget. It was only a few years before his death in 1923 that his civil rights were restored. (Contributed by Lorraine Freeman.)

William Bernard O'Donoghue. (1843-1878)

William was born in Sligo, Ireland and went to the United States as a boy. He was always an Irish patriot and hostile to Great Britain. In 1868 he was living in Port Huron, Michigan when he met Bishop Grandin and volunteered for mission service in Red River. He became a teacher of mathematics at the Saint Boniface College and also began studying theology. In 1869 he became involved in the Red River Resistance and was chosen to represent St. Boniface at the first council of residents in November of that year. He served as a delegate from St. Boniface to the Convention of Forty and he became treasurer of the provisional government. He accompanied Riel when the Métis leader fled in the face of the Red River Expeditionary Force. O'Donoghue subsequently broke with Riel, regarding the Métis as having sold out to the British. He petitioned the United States president U. S. Grant for intervention in Red River, and then turned to the Fenians for assistance in liberating the "Republic of Rupert's Land", of which he claimed to be president. The Fenian "invasion" of October 1871 was a disaster, thanks partly to opposition from Louis Riel, and O'Donoghue remained in Minnesota, where he sought employment as a teacher. He was exempted by name from the amnesty to Riel and Ambroise Lépine in 1875, although finally granted clemency in 1877. He died of tuberculosis at St. Paul, Minnesota, on 26 March 1878.

Hugh O'Lone.

Hugh was an American who ran a saloon in Winnipeg with his brother Robert O'Lone. Hugh represented Winnipeg in the convention of November 1869 and in the Provisional Government.

François Xavier Pagée. (1833-1912)

François Xavier was born at St. François Xavier. He was the son of Joseph Pagée Sr. (b. 1783) and his second wife Agathe Letendré (b. 1790). François Xavier married Philomène Lavallée (b. 1843). He was a representative to the Convention of Forty and served on Riel's Red River Council in 1870 representing his home district of St. Francois Xavier. During the Reign of Terror by the Red River Expeditionary Force following Manitoba's entry into confederation Pagée was arrested and imprisoned by Wolseley's troops along with François Xavier Dauphinais and Pierre Poitras.

Pierre Poitras. (b. 1836)

Pierre was born on November 11, 1836 at St. Francois Xavier, the son of Pierre Poitras and Marie Bruyer. He was the grandson of Andre Poitras, the founder of St. Francois Xavier. Pierre married Isabelle Bremner, the daughter of William Bremner and Marguerite Allard on February 14, 1860 at St. Francois Xavier. They had eleven children. On January 8, 1870 he was named a

member of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. He was a representative to the Convention of Forty representing his home district of St. Francois Xavier. He was also a delegate to the previous Convention of November 16, 1869. He officially seconded the motion of Louis Schmidt to adopt the Manitoba Act.

During the Reign of Terror of Wolseley's troops Pierre was arrested on August 24, 1870 while scouting with Francois Xavier Dauphinais and Francois Xavier Page. He was abused and severely beaten and wounded by the Red River Expeditionary Force. Pierre was found wintering at Wood Mountain NWT in 1873. In 1874, he sold his land at St. Francois Xavier and later applied for Scrip in 1877.

Paul Proulx. (1839-1918):

Paul was a French Canadian living in St. Vital. He married Riel's cousin, Angelique Nault in October 1863.

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Thomas Spence. (1832-1900)

Spence was born in 1832 at Edinburgh, Scotland. He came to Canada in 1862 and moved to Red River in 1866. He was a lawyer and a journalist and edited the New Nation for Riel in 1870. He attempted to set up the "Republic of Manitobah" at Portage la Prairie in 1867-68. He became the first clerk of the Legislative council in Manitoba in 1870 and was clerk of the Legislative Assembly from 1878 to 1875.

Jean Baptiste Tourond. (b. 1838)

Baptiste was born June 1, 1838 at St. Boniface, the son of Joseph Tourond and Rosalie Laderoute (b. 1816). He married Angélique Delorme, the daughter of Joseph Delorme and Brigitte Plouf dit Villebrun in 1861. They lived at St. Norbert and had 12 children. On October 11, 1869, Baptiste was part of Riel's group who stopped Colonel Dennis and crew from surveying on Metis land. Baptiste represented St. Norbert at the Convention of November 1869, and the Convention of Forty January 26, 1870; he then served on Riel's Red River Council in

1870. Baptiste voted in favor of an armed force to repulse the Fenian invasion and was elected second captain of troops from La Pointe Coupée on October 7, 1871. On October 21, 1889 he married for a second time to Regina Allard, the daughter of Joseph Allard and Julie Langevin.