

Metis Lists of Rights: The evolution of the list from the first to fourth iteration.

First List of Rights

1. That the people have the right to elect their own Legislature.
2. That the Legislature have power to pass all laws, local to the Territory, over the veto of the Executive, by a two-third vote.
3. That no act of the Dominion Parliament local to this Territory to be binding on the people until sanctioned by their representatives.
4. That all sheriffs, magistrates, constables, etc., etc., to be elected by the people.
5. A free homestead pre-emption law.
6. That a portion of the public lands to be appropriated to the benefit of schools, - the building of roads, bridges and parish buildings.
7. That it be guaranteed to connect Winnipeg by rail with the nearest line of railroad within a term of five years; the land grant for such road or roads to be subject to the Legislature of the Territory.
8. That, for the term of four years the public expenses of the Territory, civil, military and municipal, to be paid out of the Dominion funds.
9. That the military to be composed of the people now existing in the Territory.
10. That the French and English language to be common in the Legislature and Council, and all public documents and acts of Legislature to be published in both languages.
11. That the Judge of the Superior speak French and English.
12. That treaties be concluded and ratified between the Government and several of Indians of this Territory, to insure peace on the frontier.
13. That we have a full and fair representation in the Canadian Parliament.
14. That all privileges, customs and usages existing at the time of the transfer be respected.

The original *List* also included:

13. That these rights be guaranteed by McDougall before he be admitted into Territory.
14. If he have not the power himself to grant them, he must get an act of Parliament passed expressly securing us these rights; and until such act be obtained, he must stay outside the Territory.

Second List of Rights

1. That in view of the present exceptional position of the Northwest, duties upon goods imported into the country shall continue as at present (except in the case of spirituous liquors) for three years, and for such further time as may elapse, until there be uninterrupted railroad communication between Red River settlement and St. Paul, and also steam communication between Red River settlement and Lake Superior.

2. As long as this country remains a territory in the Dominion of Canada, there shall be no direct taxation, except such as may be imposed by the local legislature, for municipal or other local purposes.
3. That during the time this country shall remain in the position of a territory, in the Dominion of Canada, all military, civil, and other public expenses, in connection with the general government of the country, or that have hitherto been borne by the public fund, of the settlement, beyond the receipt of the above mentioned duties, shall be met by the Dominion Of Canada.
4. That while the burden of public expense in this territory is borne by Canada, the country be governed by a Lieutenant-Governor from Canada, and a Legislature, three members of whom being heads of departments of the Government, shall be nominated by the Governor General of Canada.
5. That after the expiration of this exceptional period, the country shall be governed, as regards its local affairs, as the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec are now governed, by a Legislature [elected] by the people, and a Ministry responsible to it, under a Lieutenant-Governor, appointed by the Governor General of Canada.
6. That there shall be no interference by the Dominion Parliament in the local affairs of this territory, other than is allowed in the provinces, and that this territory shall have and enjoy in all respects, the same privileges, advantages and aids in meeting the public expenses of this, territory as the provinces have and enjoy.
7. That, while the Northwest remains a territory, the Legislature have a right to pass all laws local to the territory, over the veto of the Lieutenant-Governor by a two-third vote.
8. A homestead and pre-emption law.
9. That, while the Northwest remains a territory, the sum of \$25,000 a year be appropriated for schools, roads and bridges.
10. That all the public buildings be at the expense of the Dominion treasury.
11. That there shall be guaranteed uninterrupted steam communication to Lake Superior, within five years; and also the establishment, by rail, of a connection with the American railway as soon as it reaches the international line.
12. That the military force required in this country be composed of natives of the country during four years.
[Lost by a vote of 16 yeas to 28 nays, and consequently struck out of the list.]
13. That the English and French languages be common in the Legislature and Courts, and that all public documents and acts of the Legislature be published in both languages.
14. That the Judge of the Supreme Court speak the French and English languages.
15. That treaties be concluded between the Dominion and the several Indian tribes of the country as soon as possible.
16. That, until the population of the country entitles us to more, we have three representatives in the Canadian Parliament, one in the Senate, and two in the Legislative Assembly.
17. That all the properties, rights and privileges as hitherto enjoyed by us be respected, and that the recognition and arrangement of local customs, usages and privileges be made under the control of the Local Legislature.
18. That the Local Legislature of this territory have full control of all the lands inside a circumference having upper Fort Garry as a centre and that the radius of this circumference be the number of miles that the American line is distant from Fort Garry.

19. That every man in the country (except uncivilized and unsettled Indians) who has attained the age of 21 years, and every British subject, a stranger to this country who has resided three years in this country and is a householder, shall have a right to vote at the election of a member to serve in the Legislature of the country, and in the Dominion Parliament; and every foreign subject, other than a British subject, who has resided the same length of time in the country, and is a householder, shall have the same right to vote on condition of his taking the oath of allegiance, it being understood that this article be subject to amendment exclusively by the Local Legislature.

20. That the Northwest territory shall never be held liable for any portion of the 300,000 paid to the Hudson's Bay Company or for any portion of the public debt of Canada, as it stands at the time of our entering the confederation; and if, thereafter, we be called upon to assume our share of said public debt, we consent only, on condition that we first be allowed the amount for which we shall be held liable.

Third List of Rights

1. That the territories heretofore known as Rupert's Land and Northwest, shall not enter into the confederation of the Dominion, except as a province, to be styled and known as the Province of Assiniboia, and with all the rights and privileges common to the different Provinces of the Dominion.

2. That we have two representatives in the Senate and four in the House of Common of Canada, until such time as an increase of population entitles the Province to a greater representation.

3. That the Province of Assiniboia shall not be held liable at any time for any portion of the public debt of the Dominion contracted before the (late the said province shall have entered the confederation, unless the said province, shall have first received from the Dominion the full amount for which the said province is to be held liable.

4. That the sum of eighty thousand dollars be paid annually by the Dominion Government to the Local Legislature of the Province.

5. That all properties, rights and privileges enjoyed by the people of this Province up to the date of our entering into the confederation be respected, and that the arrangement and confirmation of all customs, usages and privileges be left exclusively to the Local Legislature.

6. That during the term of five years, the Province of Assiniboia shall not be subjected to any direct taxation, except such as may be imposed by the Local Legislature for municipal or local purposes.

7. That a sum of money equal to eighty cents per head of the population of this Province be paid annually by the Canadian Government to the Local Legislature of the said Province, until such time as the said population shall have increased to six hundred thousand.

234

8. That the Local Legislature shall have the right to determine the qualifications of members to represent this Province in the Parliament of Canada, and in the Local Legislature.

9. That in this Province, with the exception of uncivilized and unsettled Indians, every male native citizen who has attained the age of twenty-one years; and every foreigner, being a British subject,

who has attained the same, and has resided three years in the Province, and is a householder; and every foreigner, other than a British subject, who has resided here during the same period, being a householder and having taken the oath of allegiance, shall be entitled to vote at the election of members for the Local Legislature and for the Canadian Parliament. It being understood that this article be subject to amendment exclusively by the Local Legislature.

10. That the bargain of the Hudson's Bay Company in the respect to the transfer of the government of this country to the Dominion of Canada be annulled so far as it interferes with the rights of the people of Assiniboia, and so far as it would affect our future relations with Canada.

11. That the Local Legislature of the Province of Assiniboia shall have full control over all the public lands of the Province, and the right to annul all acts or arrangements made or entered into with reference to the public lands of Rupert's Land and the Northwest, now called the Province of Assiniboia.

12. That the Government of Canada appoint a commissioner of engineers to explore the various districts of the Province of Assiniboia, and to lay before the Local Legislature a report of the mineral wealth of the province within five years from the date of our entering into confederation.

13. That treaties be concluded between Canada and the different Indian tribes of the Province of Assiniboia by and with the advice and co-operation of the Local Legislature of this Province.

14. That an uninterrupted steam communication from Lake Superior to Fort Garry be guaranteed to be completed within the space of five years.

15. That all public buildings, bridges, roads, and other public works be at the cost of the Dominion treasury.

16. That the English and French languages be common in the Legislature and in the Courts, and that all public documents, as well as all acts of the Legislature, be published in both languages.

17. That whereas the French and English speaking people of Assiniboia are so equally divided as to numbers, yet so united in their interests, and so connected by commerce, family connections, and other political and social relations, that it has happily been found impossible to bring them into hostile collision, although repeated attempts have been made by designing strangers, for reasons known to themselves, to bring about so ruinous and disastrous an event.

And whereas after all the trouble and apparent dissensions of the past, the result of misunderstanding among themselves, they have, as soon as the evil agencies referred to above were removed, become as united and friendly as ever; therefore as a means to strengthen this union and friendly feeling among all classes, we deem it expedient and advisable, That the Lieutenant-Governor, who may be appointed for the Province of Assiniboia, should be familiar with both the English and French languages.

18. That the judge of the Superior Court speak the English and French Court languages.

19. That all debts contracted by the Provisional government of the territory of the Northwest, now called Assiniboia, in consequence of the illegal and inconsiderate

measures adopted by Canadian officials to bring about a civil war in our midst, be paid out of the Dominion treasury, and that none of the members of the Provisional government, or any of those acting under them, be in any way held liable or responsible with regard to the movement or any of the actions which led to the present negotiations.

20. That in view of the present exceptional position of Assiniboia, duties upon goods imported into the Province shall, except in the case of spirituous liquors, continue as at present for at least three years from the date of our entering the confederation, and for such further time as may elapse until there be uninterrupted railroad communication between Winnipeg and St. Paul, and also steam communication between Winnipeg and Lake Superior.

Fourth List of Rights

May 9, 1870

1. That this province be governed:

1) By a Lieutenant-Governor, appointed by the Governor-General of Canada;

2) By a Senate;

3) By a Legislature chosen by the people with a responsible ministry.

2. That, until such time as the increase of the population in this country entitle us to a greater number, we have two representatives in the Senate and four in the Commons of Canada.

3. That in entering the Confederation the Province of the Northwest be completely free from the public debt of Canada; and if called upon to assume a part of the said debt of Canada, that it be only after having received from Canada the same amount for which the said Province of the Northwest should be held responsible.

4. That the annual sum of \$80,000 be allotted by the Dominion of Canada to the Legislature of the Province of the Northwest.

5. That all properties, rights and privileges enjoyed by us up to this day be respected, and that the recognition and settlement of customs, usages and privileges be left exclusively to the decision of the Local Legislature.

6. That this country be submitted to no direct taxation except such as may be imposed by the local legislature for municipal or other local purposes.

7. That the schools be separate, and that the public money for schools be distributed among the different religious denominations in proportion to their respective populations according to the system of the Province of Quebec.

8. That the determination of the qualifications of members for the parliament of the province or for the parliament of Canada be left to the local legislature.

9. That in this province, with the exception of the Indians, who are neither civilized nor settled, every man having attained the age of 21 years, and every foreigner being a British subject, after having resided three years in this country, and being Possessed of a house, be entitled to vote at the elections for the members of the local legislature and of the Canadian Parliament, and that every foreigner other than a British subject, having resided here during the same period, and being proprietor of a house, be likewise entitled to vote on condition of taking the oath of allegiance. It is understood that this article is subject to amendment, by the local legislature exclusively.

10. That the bargain of the Hudson Bay Company with respect to the transfer of government of this country to the Dominion of Canada, never have in any case an effect prejudicial to the rights of Northwest.
11. That the Local Legislature of this Province have full control over all the lands of the Northwest.
12. That a commission of engineers appointed by Canada explore the various districts of the Northwest, and lay before the Local Legislature within the space of five years a report of the mineral wealth of the country.
13. That treaties be concluded between Canada and the different Indian tribes of the Northwest, at the request and with the co-operation of the Local Legislature.
14. That an uninterrupted steam communication from Lake Superior to Fort Garry be guaranteed to be completed within the space of five years, as well as the construction of a railroad connecting the American railway as soon as the latter reaches the international boundary.
15. That all public buildings and constructions be at the cost of the Canadian Exchequer.
16. That both the English and French languages be common in the Legislature and in the Courts; and that all public documents as well as the acts of the Legislature be published in both languages.
17. That the Lieutenant-Governor to be appointed for the province of the Northwest be familiar with both the English and French languages.
18. That the Judge of the Supreme Court speak the English and French languages.
19. That all debts contracted by the Provisional government of the territory of the Northwest, now called Assiniboia, in consequence of the illegal and inconsiderate measures adopted by Canadian officials to bring about a civil war in our midst, be paid out of the Dominion treasury, and that none of the Provisional government, or any of those acting under them, be in any way held liable or responsible with regard to the movement or any of the actions which led to the present negotiations.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute