

Riel Mini-Conference Papers

**A. S. Lussier,
Editor**



Copyright © 1979 By Antoine S. Lussier All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of Pemmican Publications Inc., except for brief excerpts used in critical reviews.

Reprinted 1983



**PEMMICAN
PUBLICATIONS**

34 Carlton Street, Winnipeg
Manitoba, Canada R3C 1N9

About the Authors

- Ken Hatt:** Member of the Sociology-Anthropology Department, Carlton University, Ottawa, Ontario.
- Gilles Martel:** Sociologist from l'Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Québec. He is also co-author of *Louis Riel: Poésies de jeunesse* - Editions du Blé, St. Boniface, Manitoba, 1977.
- Thomas E. Flanagan:** Member of the Department of Political Science, University of Calgary. Dr. Flanagan has written extensively on Riel's messianic vision. He also co-authored *Louis Riel: Poésies de jeunesse*.
- Fritz Pannekoek:** Chief of the Historical Research Section, Parks Canada, Prairie Region, presently working on the Social History of the Fur Trade.
- John Foster:** Member of the History Department, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.
- Raymond Huel:** Member of the History Department, University of Lethbridge. Raymond has done most of his research in the areas of the French-Canadian fact in Saskatchewan as well as the French-Catholics of Western Canada.
- Glen Campbell:** Member of the Department of Romance Studies, University of Calgary. He co-authored *Louis Riel: Poésies de jeunesse*.

Contents

Introduction	11
<i>Antoine S. Lussier</i>	
The Riel Project	15
<i>Dr. G. F. G. Stanley</i>	
Le Projet Riel	18
<i>Dr. G. F. G. Stanley</i>	
1. Louis Riel as Charismatic Leader	23
<i>Ken Hatt</i>	
2. Les Indiens dans la pensée messianique de Louis Riel	31
<i>Gilles Martel</i>	
3. Louis Riel's Name "David"	55
<i>Thomas Flanagan</i>	
4. Some Comments on the Social Origins of the Riel Protest of 1869	65
<i>Fritz Pannekoek</i>	
5. The Métis: The People and the Term	77
<i>John Foster</i>	
6. Louis Schmidt: A Forgotten Métis	87
<i>Raymond Huel</i>	
7. A Survey of Louis Riel's Poetry	95
<i>Glen Campbell</i>	
8. The Political Thought of Louis Riel	111
<i>Thomas Flanagan</i>	
Appendix	
Louis Riel: A Preliminary Bibliography, 1963-1978	129
<i>Thérèse D. Lafontaine</i>	
Footnotes	163

- MARTEL, Gilles, CAMPBELL Glen, FLANAGAN, Thomas E., 1977: *Louis Riel, poésies de jeunesse*. les Editions du Blé, St. Boniface, X + 161 p.
- MORTON, W.L. (ed.), 1956: *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and other Papers*. (Introduction by MORTON, W.L., pp. 1-148). Champlain Society, Toronto, 635 p.
- MORTON, W.L., *Manitoba, A History*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, XIII + 547 p.
- MULVANEY, Charles Pelham, 1885: *The History of the North-West Rebellion of 1885*. A.H. Hovey & Co., Toronto, 424 p., front illust. (incl. ports., maps).
- NADEAU, Gabriel, 1944: "La folie de Riel." *Le Devoir*, XXXV (248), 27 octobre 1944, complet rendu. Conférence à la société historique de Montréal, le 25 octobre 1944.) (Le texte complet se trouve dans la collection Nadeau de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec, Montréal).
- O'DEA, Thomas F., 1968: *The Mormons*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London 6th ed., (c. 1957), XII + 289 p.
- OSLER, E.B., 1962: *Louis Riel: un homme à prendre*. Ed. du Jour, Montréal, 299 p. (Trad. Vien, Rossel).
- SMITH, J., (trad.), 1965: *Le Livre de Mormon*. Récit écrit sur plaques, de la main de Mormon d'après les plaques de Néphi. Traduit en anglais, d'après les plaques, par Joseph Smith, fils. Publié par l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ des Saints des Derniers Jours, 6e éd. française, 530 p.
- STANELY, G.F.G., 1966: *The Birth of Western Canada. A History of the Riel Rebellions*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, XIV + 475 p.
- 1969: *Louis Riel*, Ryerson Press, Toronto, 5th ed., (c 1963), 433 p.
- THOMAS, Lewis H., 1970: "Document of Western History, Louis Riel's Petition of Rights, 1884." *Saskatchewan History*, XXIII (1): 16-26.
- XXXXX, 1887: *Le véritable Riel, tel que dépeint dans les lettres de Sa Grandeur Mgr Grandin, évêque de St-Albert, du Rév. P. Leduc, vicaire général de St-Albert, du Rév. P. André, supérieur des missions du district de Carleton, des Rév. Pères Touze, Fourmond, Vegreville, Moulin et Lecoq, missionnaires du Nord Ouest, d'une religieuse de Batoche, etc. Suivi d'extraits des mandements de Nos Seigneurs les évêques, concernant l'agitation Riel*. Imprimerie générale, Montréal, 63p.

3

Louis Riel's Name "David"

Thomas Flanagan

A LOOK INTO the card catalogue of any sizeable Canadian library, will reveal a number of entries under the heading RIEL, LOUIS DAVID. One will probably not wonder whether this was the man's true name, since librarians have a reputation for accuracy. But in fact his name was only Louis Riel; he did not begin to call himself David until he was more than thirty years old; and when he did, he almost always put the new name in inverted commas—Louis "David" Riel—to show that it had a special significance. The story of how he acquired that name and what it meant to him is worth telling because it casts a little light on the inner world of this strange man.

Riel was born and baptized on October 22 or 23, 1844. The former date comes from his mother, the latter from himself.¹ We shall probably never know which is correct, for the baptismal registry of St. Boniface was subsequently destroyed by fire. That loss also means we shall probably never discover what Riel's full baptismal name was. He was never called anything other than Louis, as far as we know; but there is reason to think he bore additional names. When he was about twenty and had recently been expelled from the College of Montreal, he wrote three letters to George-Etienne Cartier asking for help in finding a job.² He signed them J.B.A. Louis Riel. The "A" is a mystery. The J.B. probably stood for Jean-Baptiste; Riel had several ancestors by that name, his father's name was Jean-Louis, and he named his own son Jean. But nowhere is there a trace of David.

The name first appeared in Riel's life in October, 1873. Because Cartier died in the spring of that year, there had to be a by-election to fill his seat in the

House of Commons. He had represented the Manitoba riding of Provencher because Riel, who could easily have won it in the previous general election, had stepped aside in Cartier's behalf. Now Riel decided to contest the by-election. In the midst of the campaign, a group of Canadians in Winnipeg succeeded in getting a warrant sworn out for Riel's arrest for the murder of Thomas Scott. Riel went into hiding in the woods at Vermette's Point across the Red River from St. Norbert. He had been there a month when he was unanimously elected *in absentia* on October 13, 1873.³

There are two explanations of how these circumstances led to the appearance of the name David. Let us consider the more prosaic one first. Riel was now a fugitive. Somehow he had to travel east without being arrested. His friend Joseph Dubuc wrote to him on October 17, advising him to adopt an alias: "In hotels and on steamboats you will be more or less obliged to give a name. And it would not be prudent to use your own. So take some name. A very ordinary name like Pierre *David* or Jean Dubois has been suggested. (Italics added)".⁴ It is not known whether Riel travelled east under the pseudonym of David, but there is evidence that he used it in Montreal in January, 1874.⁵

The second explanation is more poetic. When Dubuc visited Riel in hiding, he compared him to the David of the ancient Hebrews.⁶ The point of similarity of course, was that Riel, like David, had achieved an unexpected success as a young man. Each had defeated an external power which threatened his people with destruction. And then each, in a sudden reversal of fortune, had been compelled to flee: David from the wrath of Saul, Riel from Canadian justice.

The story is plausible enough. A comparison with David is the sort of remark that Dubuc could easily have made to Riel. Both knew their Bible thoroughly after their years at the College of Montreal. But there is no contemporary documentation of the story. It did not get written down until many years later, when Riel was already convinced of being "the David of the Christian era". Hence we cannot be sure whether Riel's association with the name David began in this appropriately symbolic fashion, or whether it was merely an alias to avoid detection.

For the next two years there is no record of the name David in Riel's life. In April of 1874, when he made his dramatic foray into the House of Commons to sign the Members' register, he used the simple signature Louis Riel.⁷ The same will be found on all his correspondence of the period. Yet it seems likely that he was internally meditating upon his resemblance with David and finding consolation in it.

For these were very difficult years for Riel. He suffered one political setback after another, culminating in the amnesty of April 1875, which sentenced him to five years of banishment from Canada. He went to Washington, D.C. to ask President Grant to help him mount an invasion of Manitoba but that plan came to nothing.⁸

As politics disappointed him, Riel turned more and more to religion. He began to think that his hardships were a purification and preparation for a greater mission. The downtrodden Métis would be a new chosen people; and he, at their head, would lead a tremendous religious revival in America. He would be a prophet, the "Prophet of the New World".⁹

He began to have ecstatic and visionary experiences in December, 1875, while staying in Washington, D.C., with a friend, Edmond Mallet. He also began to speak openly and very excitedly about his divine mission. Mallet, thinking Riel had gone insane, took him to stay with Father Primeau in Worcester, Massachusetts. Riel was then passed from hand to hand until he ended in the care of his uncle and aunt, John and Lucie Lee, who lived near Montreal. After several weeks of trying to cope with their nephew, they committed him—without obtaining or seeking his consent—to the lunatic asylum of Saint-Jean-de-Dieu in Longue-Pointe, a suburb of Montreal. It was March 6, 1876.

At this point the name David appears in the story again. Riel's relatives, and the friends with whom they were co-operating, did not want his true identity to be widely known at the hospital. He was supposed to be in exile, so his presence in the country was illegal and would have caused a scandal if publicized. Thus a pseudonym was employed. Riel was admitted to the asylum as Louis R. David.¹⁰ Although it cannot be proven from the documents, the choice of David under these circumstances suggests that Riel had been using that alias with the knowledge of his friends.

Before Riel was admitted, his uncle had an interview with Dr. Henry Howard, visiting physician at the hospital. Dr. Howard was appointed by the provincial government as a sort of inspector of the asylum. Hence it was necessary to gain his co-operation if Riel was to be secretly admitted. Lee rather reluctantly revealed his nephew's true identity to Howard, who "consented immediately with pleasure to the idea of admitting Louis David Riel to the asylum the next day under the name of Louis R. David, and promised to do all (he) could to keep it a secret from the nuns, the orderlies and strangers. . ."¹¹

This conspiracy caused an unpleasant incident when Riel was brought to the hospital. In Dr. Howard's words:

I said to him: "I am happy to meet you, Mr. David; I am Dr. Howard." He made a gesture of surprise and cried: "Why do you call me 'David'? My name is Louis David Riel." Taking a little prayer book from his pocket, and opening it to the first page, he gave it to me and said: "See my name there, Louis David Riel, written in the hand of my beloved sister."¹²

At once the Sister who was present grabbed the book, ripped out the offending page, and said, "You are known here only under the name of Monsieur

David!" A terrible struggle ensued, and Dr. Howard recalled that he had never seen a man in such fury. If Riel had not been restrained, he would have attacked the nun and "torn her to pieces."¹³

If Dr. Howard's memory can be trusted (the story was not written down until a decade later), Riel had assumed the identity of Louis "David" Riel by the time he entered the hospital. In any case, the name became enormously important to Riel within a few weeks.

He explained its meaning to Bishop Ignace Bourget in a long letter written in two instalments on April 20 and May 1, 1876. He referred to his concealment under a false identity at the hospital when he wrote:

It is your enemies (God said to Riel) whom I have used to make you resemble David (by compelling him to flee for his life) and your so-called friends whom I am using to make you have the name of David (by using a false name at the asylum).¹⁴

Although Riel did not spell it out, he probably remembered that David had also been taken for a madman at the court of the Phoenicians, where he had gone to hide from Saul. The difference was that David had intentionally pretended to be insane, whereas Riel was an involuntary patient in the asylum. But in later years, perhaps inspired by David's example, Riel would claim that he had purposely simulated madness so the Canadian government would stop persecuting the Métis.¹⁵

Riel's imaginative mind now began to see resemblances to David going far beyond the situation of flight and concealment. He elaborated a number of similarities which carry us deep into the private world of his revelations.

He had learned from God that the North American Indians were really descendants of certain ancient Hebrews who had crossed the ocean in search of freedom. The Métis, the chosen people of the present age, were thus affiliated with the first chosen people, the Jews, through the Indians. This led Riel to discover an ingenious genealogical resemblance between himself and David. David had been seven-eighths Hebrew and one-eighth Moabite. His paternal great-grandmother Ruth was from Moab. Riel, in comparison was seven-eighths French-Canadian and one-eighth Indian, or Hebrew. His paternal grandmother was a Chipewyan woman, making his genealogy a mirror image of David's. God said to him:

By the Indian blood which flows in your veins, you are Jewish. And through your paternal great-grandmother you belong to the Jewish nation as much as the first David belonged to the Gentiles, through his paternal great-grandmother. And as the first David belonged to the Jewish nation through all his other ancestors, so you belong to the Gentiles through all your other ancestors. You are the David of the Christian era, of who the former David was only the symbol.¹⁶

To be the "David of the Christian era" was not merely an empty title. Riel interpreted it quite literally. He wrote that he would be the "messiah of human glory whom the people of Jacob expected to find in the incarnate world."¹⁷ The Jews had rejected Christ because He had been a spiritual messiah. Riel would lead them to Christ by founding the earthly kingdom they had always expected. God told him:

You will re-establish the people which is dear to me (Jews) . . . A third of the Hebrew people is going to be converted now. Through the triumphant and victorious Henry V (the Comte de Chambord, Bourbon pretender to the French throne), you will give Poland to the House of Jacob, so that on its soil I may once again gaze upon the throne of David.¹⁸

On May 19, 1876, Riel was transferred to the asylum of Saint-Michel-Archange at Beauport, outside Quebec City. He was registered once again under the alias of Louis R. David (a new alias, Larochelle, was also employed at Beauport).¹⁹ Riel continued to cling to his identification with the Biblical David. While at Beauport, he worked out the details of a vast reform of Christianity. As the modern David, he would reintroduce important elements of Judaism into religious practice: The Mosaic Law, circumcision, polygamy, the Saturday sabbath. The result of this system, had it ever been established, would have been a form of Judaeo-Christianity something like that practised by the earliest followers of Christ before St. Paul released them from the Old Law.²⁰

One curious element in the program was incest. Riel wrote that marriage between brother and sister would be permitted, even encouraged, under certain circumstances—chiefly if the death of a father meant that his oldest son had to devote himself to caring for his mother and younger children, thus making it impossible to marry in the conventional way. Riel could not have been directly imitating Jewish models, since incest was sternly forbidden by the Mosaic Law (although it seems to have been practised in patriarchal times). However, Riel may have been indirectly inspired by the Hebrew practice of "levirate marriage", that is the marriage of a man to his brother's widow in order to protect family property. Riel adduced similar utilitarian reasons to defend his proposal for incest.

Personal motives may also have played a role. The circumstances which, in Riel's view, justified incest were precisely those of his own youth. His father died when he was nineteen, leaving a numerous family of younger children to be cared for. Riel may have had an incestuous desire for his sister Sara, although the evidence on this score is tenuous at best.²¹

There is an interesting connection between incest and the family of David, whose son Ammon, raped his half-sister Tamar. David's failure to punish this crime led Tamar's brother Absalom to take his own revenge; such was

the beginning of the dissolution of David's family. Now Riel, after he had been discharged from Beauport and had become secretly engaged to Evelina Barnabé, wrote a poem to her about this subject.

Et tout à vénérer que soit le sanctuaire
De la famille, hélas, il se trouve souillé
Plus souvent qu'on voudrait, même entre soeur et frère
Excusez la parole claire
Car je ne vous tiens pas un discours embrouillé
Et se jamais Dieu veut que vous deveniz mère
Evelina, souvenez-vous
Que le fils de David, Ammon, commit l'inceste
Avec sa soeur Thamara. Et le divin courroux
S'alluma pour punir ce désordre funeste.²²

Perhaps contemplation of the sad fate of David's family helped Riel to overcome his desire for incest. At any rate, he only advocated the idea once in all his writings.²³ We do not know if he repudiated it, since he wrote no more about it, except in the poem to Evelina; but incest certainly does not appear in a favourable light there.

Incest aside, Riel's intention was to revive certain elements of Judaism and fuse them with Catholicism. Thus his religion was more than Judaism, and he was more than David. He signed his Name "Louis 'David' Riel: Prophet, Priest-King, Infallible Pontiff."²⁴ Certainly "infallible pontiff" was a Christian concept of which the Jews had no inkling. Yet the other titles were Davidic. As the Jews had not divided church and state, David had been priest as well as king; and his prophetic voice had spoken in the psalms. Riel's identity as a new David meant that he aspired to gather all power, both temporal and spiritual, into his own hands, and wield it under the divine inspiration vouchsafed to prophets.

This theocratic program was worthy of the millennium, and indeed Riel understood himself as the harbinger of Christ's return to earth. He applied to himself the predictions of the Book of the Apocalypse. He became the knight on the white horse. (6:1-2)

The Apocalypse is a trustworthy guide which I have never understood. But now I can explain its parables and its divine numbers. The Lord Jesus Christ tells me: Louis, you are Louis: you are the knight to whom I give my white horse of the Apocalypse . . .

David, you are David: you will chant the psalms of my glory till the end. Your throne is established for ever . . .

Riel, you are Riel: I will give you strength of body and soul against the spiritual and temporal enemies of my catholic, apostolic, and living church of the Shining Mountains.²⁵

Riel's religious enthusiasm was most intense in 1876. The following year it subsided somewhat, at least to external appearances. He no longer insisted that others acknowledge the validity of his mission as the modern David. It is not clear whether this was a genuine change of heart, or merely learning to say what was expected of him—perhaps a little of both. At any rate, he was released from the Asylum of Beauport on January 23, 1878, and returned to the United States.

There now ensued a most interesting period in Riel's life. If he had ever truly given up his novel beliefs, they quickly returned in full force. He was having visions and revelations within months of his release from the hospital.²⁶ Yet he kept this side of his life private. He was neither insane nor heretical to all external appearances. The prophet-king was in hiding. He determined to remain inconspicuous until God Himself would show the way by performing some extraordinary and highly visible miracle on his behalf. Then it would be time to convert the world to his new cult.

Although he kept his secret well, he occasionally confided, at least partially, in sympathetic friends. Around 1881 he told James Willard Schultz, a Montana trader:

Do you know, these people of mine are just as were the children of Israel, a persecuted race deprived of their heritage. But I will redress their wrongs; I will wrest justice for them from the tyrant. I will be unto them a second David.²⁷

Like David, he too composed psalms, which he wrote out at night by the light of the fire in the Métis encampments. But these disclosures were exceptional. Riel took pains to appear "normal" in the eyes of most observers.

The name David, however, was obviously still important to him. He pursued the interesting strategy of trying to get official approval for it. He had already taken steps in that direction in Beauport when he had written to Bishop Taché explaining that he had particularly asked for help of the "Holy King David" during the troubles in Red River. He had promised David that if the latter would defend him, he would one day definitely place himself under his patronage by taking his name. He aske Taché:

Deign to bless me in Jesus and Mary, and confirm my second Baptismal name, the name of a great servant of God, that I may have the grace of signing Louis "David" Riel.²⁸

Taché's reply is not recorded, but we can assume he gave Riel no encouragement.

On March 9, 1882, Riel's common-law marriage was blessed by a Jesuit missionary in Montana. With the permission of the priest, Louis went through the ceremony as Louis "David" Riel, and inscribed his adopted name on the wed-

ding certificate.²⁹ He similarly used the name David on his naturalization papers when he became an American citizen on March 16, 1883.³⁰ He drafted a letter to Taché telling of his marriage and change of citizenship and pointing out how he had used his adopted name. The implication was that he was officially recognized as "David" in the United States, even without Taché's approval. But the letter was probably never sent.³¹

Riel finally emerged from spiritual seclusion during the North-West Rebellion. That movement was as much a religious as a political event. Riel introduced the Métis to a modified version of the creed which he had propounded at Beauport. He declared that Rome had fallen and that religious primacy had passed to the Métis. Although he was silent about some of his more extreme ideas, such as polygamy, he impressed upon the Métis that they were a new chosen people who should adopt the practices of Judaism. He went as far as instituting the Saturday sabbath through a resolution of the Exovedate. And of course he made no secret of his affiliation with David. He boldly signed official papers "Louis 'David' Riel, Exovede."³²

As General Middleton's army drew inexorably towards Batoche, Riel once again imagined himself in the role of the youthful David, saving his people from certain defeat. He wrote in his diary:

I have seen the giant; he is coming, he is hideous. It is Goliath. . . . Because he will not humble himself, his head is cut off.³³

But the aging David was not equal to the task. This time Goliath was the victor, and Riel surrendered, after the Métis were overwhelmed in the battle of Batoche. He was brought to Regina, where he was tried and convicted of high treason.

Once again Riel took consolation in the story of David. At his trial he told the jury that he had been "hunted as an elk for fifteen years," ever since Wolseley's troops had entered Red River in August, 1870. But by Riel's own computations, David had had to spend seventeen years in the wilderness before assuming the throne of Saul. His own deliverance thus could not be too far away. "If the misfortunes that I have had to go through were to be as long as those of old David, I would have two years still, but I hope it will come sooner."³⁴

When these words were spoken on August 1, 1885, Riel had been convicted but not yet sentenced. The imposition of the death sentence broke his confidence, temporarily at least. Fathers Cochin and Fourmond, taking advantage of this weakness, persuaded him to sign a recantation of all his heresies and of his "false mission as prophet," the root of all his errors. Riel signed, and thus re-entered the Church on August 5. Yet it is doubtful whether this abjuration was really sincere. Within a few days he would again be receiving revelations from the Holy Ghost. Even when he signed the document, he made

his own copy which he headed Louis "David" Riel, not Louis Riel, as the priests had done.³⁵ It could perhaps be interpreted, under the circumstances, as a small gesture of defiance and belief in his mission.

Riel now had only about three months to live. He remained within the Church, but only through the forbearance of his confessor, Father André; for he continued to experience revelations and to assert his prophetic mission. He freely used the signature Louis "David" Riel in these last months. And, as the following diary entry shows, he still saw himself as the valiant young champion of a small people facing the giant of oppression. Soon he wrote,

(t)he spouse of Christ, the Church, my mother, will shower me with her own blessings. Her solicitude will honour me because I, little David in the service of the great King, had the courage to go outside the camp of Israel for a moment, to try to hold off the giant who was marching against all of us with his redoubtable strength and reputation.³⁶

What shall we make of Riel's identification with David? First, note that it was not a case of schizophrenic change of identity. Riel never asserted that he literally was David, neither the original nor a reincarnation. He was always aware that the association with David was metaphorical, which he emphasized by writing his adopted name in quotation marks.

He made David's career the model of his own, just as he made the Hebrews at large the model of the new chosen people, the Métis. David's life resembled, in miniature, the history of the Hebrews as conceived by their prophets: the initial success, a period of suffering, and a glorious final salvation.

Thus Riel found in the Bible a symbolic explanation of his own life and the history of his people. The analogy grew into the new religion which Riel intended to found, a blend of Judaism and Catholicism with a special role for the Métis. As a would-be religious founder, Riel has many parallels among other leaders of native peoples who have led their followers in revolt not only against the white man's government but against his Church. Religion can be as much a weapon as guns or swords. In its own way, the Bible has sparked more resistance movements among colonized nations than have Marx or Lenin.³⁷

Some Comments on the Social Origins of the Riel Protest of 1869 Fritz Pannekoek

4

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING folk of Red River looked with excitement and hope on the debates that surrounded the confederation of the eastern provinces. The Protestant Canadians, arriving in vocal and visible numbers in the 1860s to farm along the Assiniboine and to trade in the small village of Winnipeg, provided ample evidence of the vigour that the new connection would bring. All were anxious that union be effected quickly and quietly. Even the Protestant English speaking mixed-bloods looked to Canada to pull Red River out of its morass of pettiness and squalor. When it became clear that Canada had secured the chartered land of the Hudson's Bay Company, most were ready, indeed anxious, to welcome the Canadian Governor, no matter how obnoxious he might be.

If the English-speaking half-breeds applauded the demise of old Red River with its peasant ways and too dominant patriarchs, the Catholic French-speaking Métis feared its passing. It was increasingly obvious as the 1860s pil-