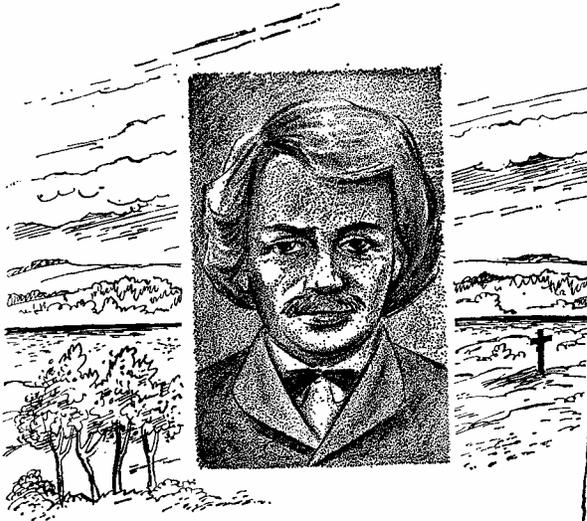


FAMOUS LETTERS IN CANADIAN HISTORY



Dear Relatives, we thank you for the news that you took the trouble to send us. Since you are willing to help us, may God Bless you, in all what is to be done for our Common Salvation.

Justice Commands to take up arms. And if you see the Police passing by, stop it, and take away their arms.

Afterwards notify the wood Indians that they might be surprised; let them be ready to all events, in being calm and courageous. to take all the powder, the shot, the lead, the posts and the cartridges, from the Hudson's Bay stores, at Nut Lake and Fishing Lake. Do not kill anybody. Do not molest nor ill treat anybody. ^{but take away the arms.} Fear not.

Louis "David" Riel. Executed.

Patriot or Traitor?

What was Louis Riel – a patriot or a traitor?

This conflicting question which hung over much of his brief life stands out in this letter to friends in which he counsels insurrection while warning against violence.

Riel was twice elected to Parliament but was expelled from the Commons and later exiled from Canada for his part in the Red River Rebellion 1869-70.

He was called back from exile to lead the Indians and Métis in the North West Rebellion of 1885

A notation on this document from the Public Archives of Canada shows it was used as evidence to convict Riel of treason and he was hanged for it at Regina on Nov. 16, 1885.

Louis Riel's Advice to Followers

Dear relatives:

We thank you for the good news that you took the trouble to send us.

Since you are willing to help us, may God bless you in all what is to be done for our common salvation.

Justice commands us to take up arms and if you see the police passing by, stop it, and take

away their arms. Afterwards notify the wood Indians that they might be surprised; let them be ready to all events in being calm and courageous, to take all the powder, the shot, the lead, the posts and the cartridges from the Hudson's Bay stores at Nut Lake and Fishing Lake. Do not kill anybody. Do not molest nor ill treat anybody but take away their arms. Fear not.

Louis "David" Riel.