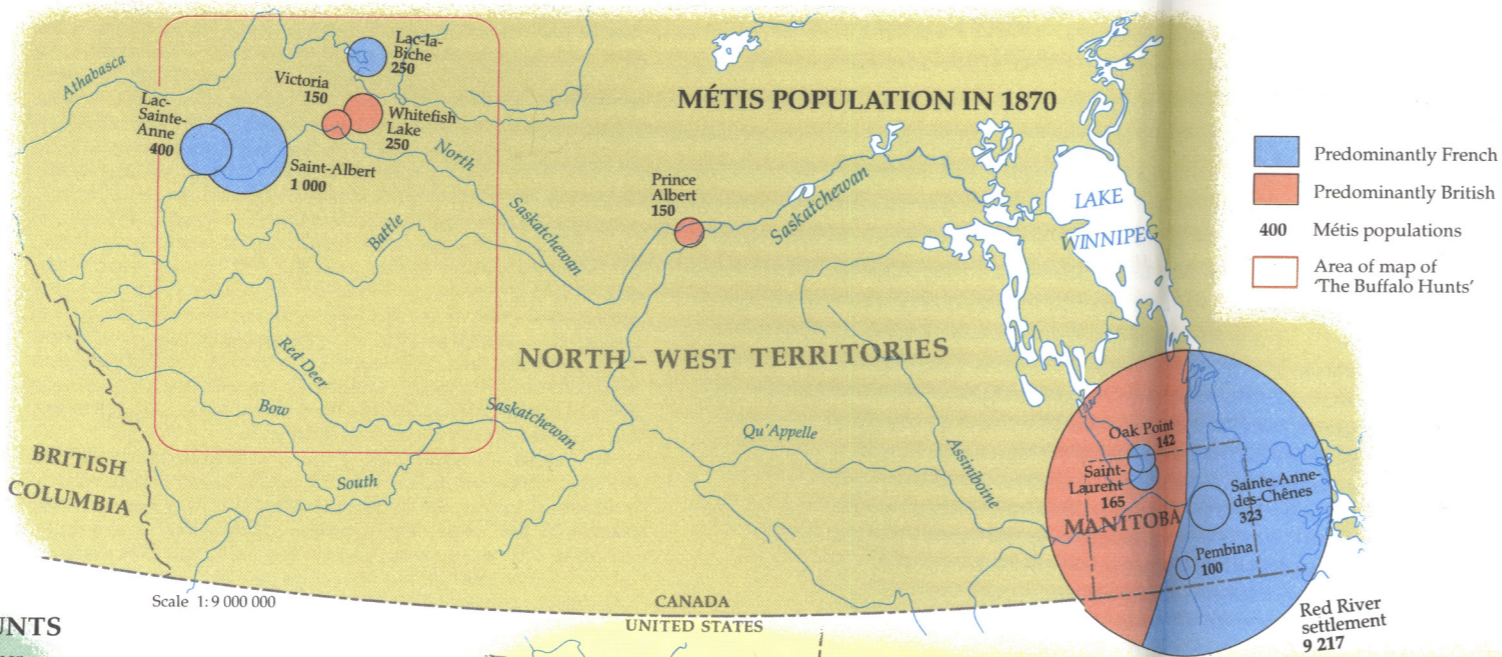


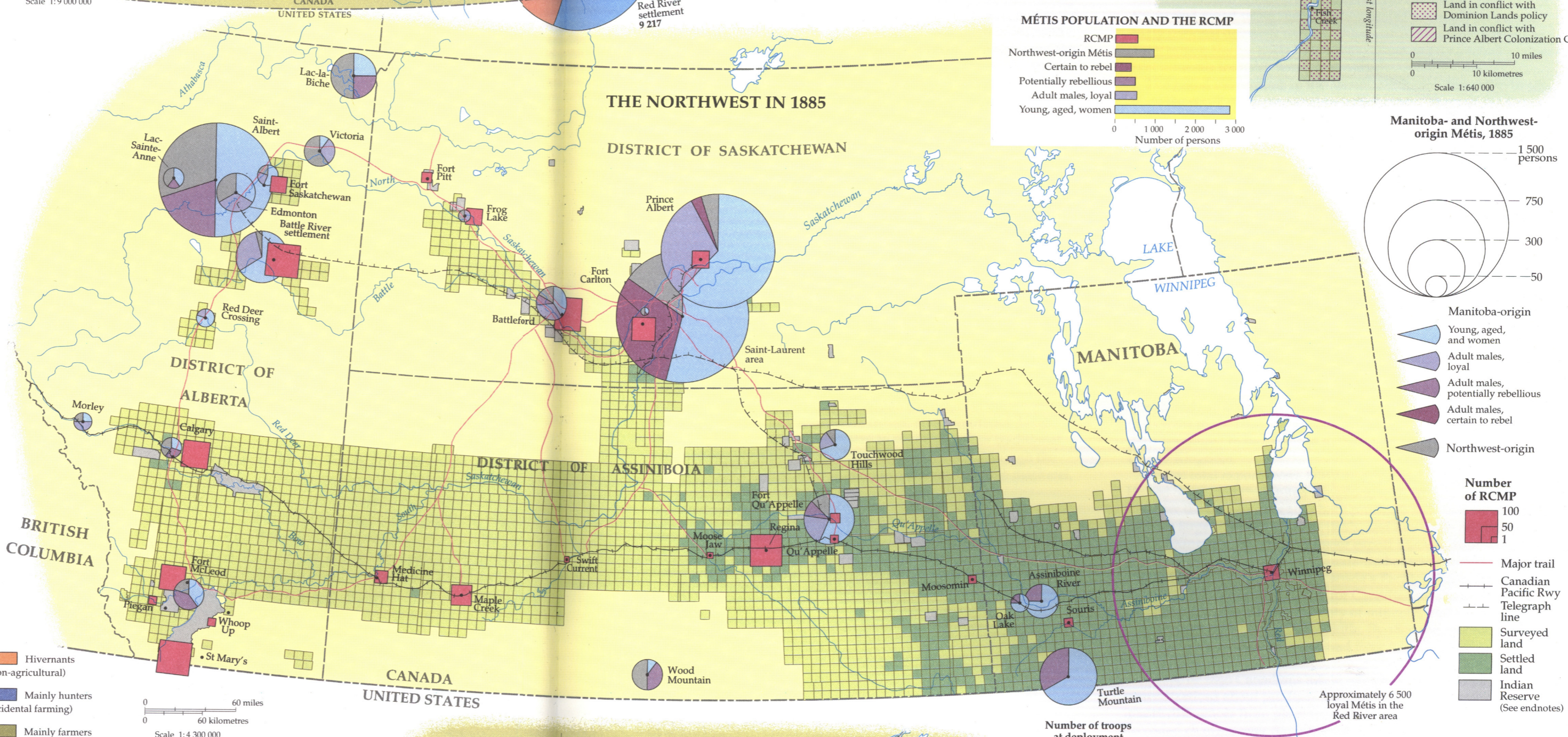
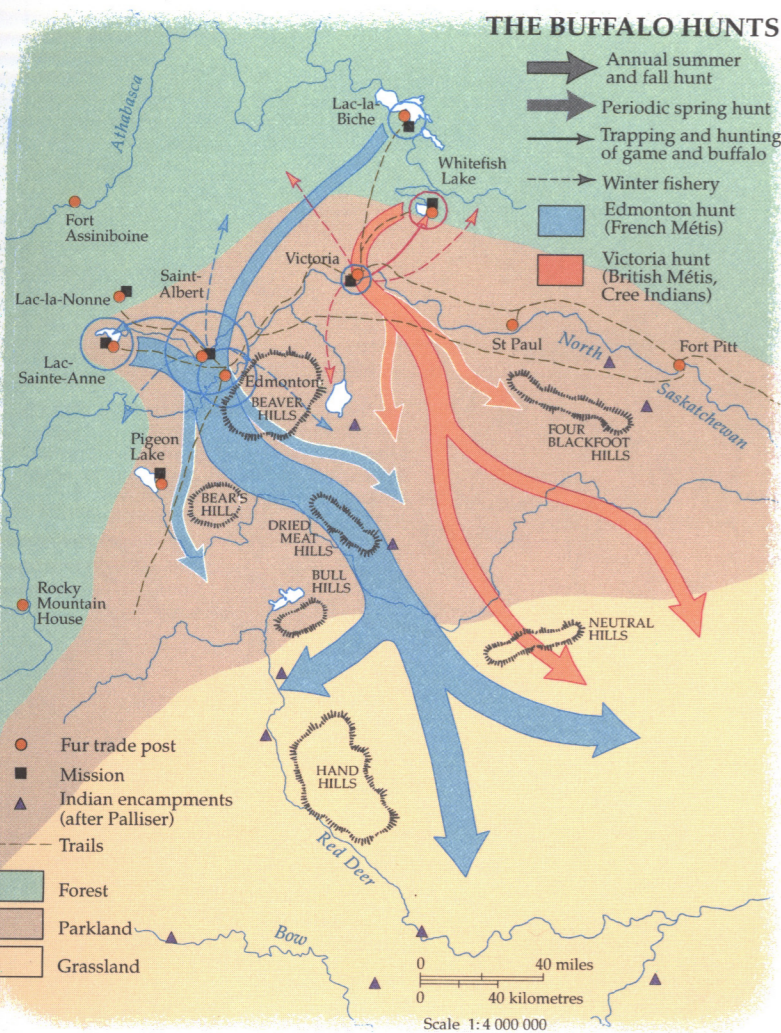
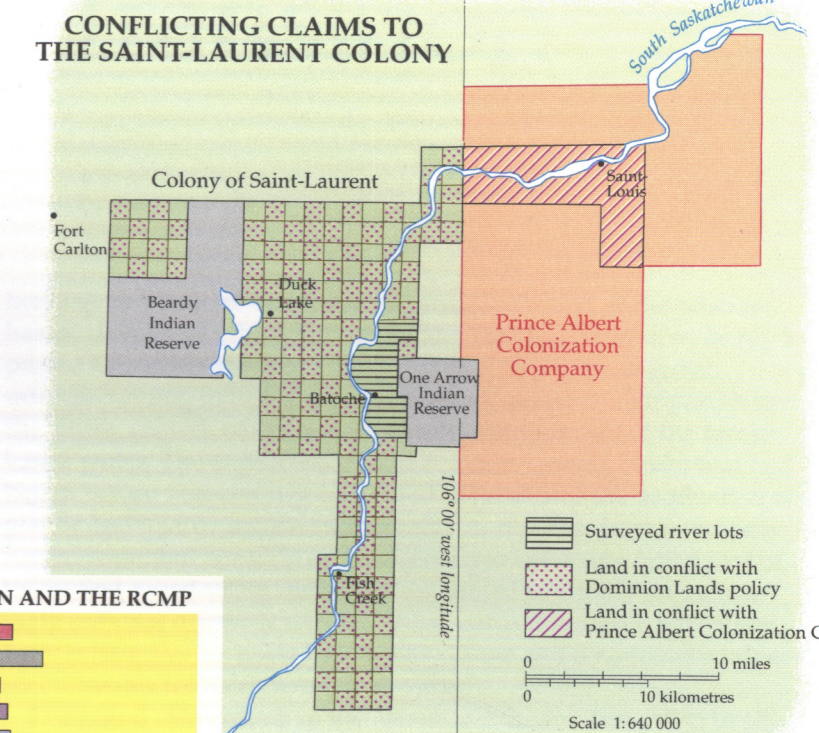
DISPERSAL OF THE MANITOBA MÉTIS AND THE NORTHWEST REBELLION, 1870-1885

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For the Métis, the mixed-blood population created by the western fur trade, the late 19th century brought a series of conflicts caused by the ever-increasing white immigration. The Red River rebellion in 1870, ending with a Canadian statute creating the province of Manitoba, in part as a homeland for the Métis, did not solve the problems. Continued harassment by newcomers and refusal by the Canadian government to recognize Métis land claims led to dispersals. Some left for the Dakota and Montana territories in the United States, but most migrated north and west along the trails they had used as hunters or freighters for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), settling at locations in the Northwest similar to the lands they left behind. The most common destination was near the forks of the Saskatchewan River, southwest of Prince Albert. There, and at a score of less preferred destinations, they established river and lakefront homes, recreating the pattern of long lots in the old Red River settlement. Indeed, the Métis communities that emerged in the late 1870s and early 1880s resembled the old Red River parishes even to the extent of newcomers relocating next to their former nearest neighbours.



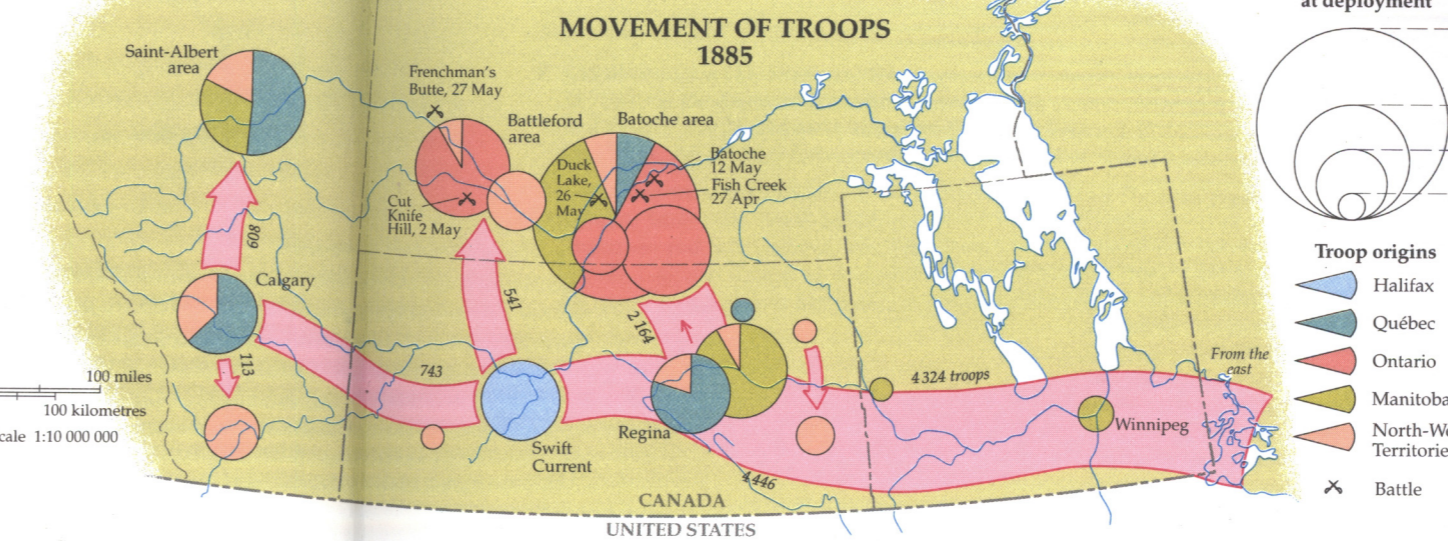
Among the causes of conflict with Canada and its Dominion Lands policy was the pattern of Métis resettlement. At Saint-Laurent, for example, the district had been laid out by the Department of the Interior in 1879 according to the rectangular pattern prescribed by Canada's homestead law of 1872. At the time of the survey persons already settled were accommodated on long lots, but the bulk of the migration from Manitoba occurred over the next four years. As a result, new arrivals 'squatted' on vacant river frontage according to their own informal survey, but contrary to Canadian law. Moreover, some found themselves on land reserved for others. Since 1882 Canada had been reserving huge blocks of territory (10 million acres in all) for promoters forming 'colonization companies.' In the vicinity of Saint-Laurent the recipients of such Crown patronage called themselves the Prince Albert Colonization Company. The Métis petitioned repeatedly for a new survey; Canada kept refusing. Early in 1884 the settlers decided to launch a more vigorous protest following their old leader, Louis Riel. His appearance in Saint-Laurent in June 1884 prompted the Government of Canada to undertake a quiet but comprehensive enumeration of all 'North West Half Breeds.' By August Canada knew that approximately 500 men were likely to take up arms if their grievances were not remedied. The government responded by sending troops to the Northwest.



SEASONAL ECONOMIC CYCLE OF THE SAINT-ALBERT MÉTIS

		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Forest	Trapping, hunting woodland game												
	Lake fishing (mainly whitefish)												
Parkland	Dispersed hunting of buffalo and woodland game, trapping												
	Organized spring buffalo hunt (in some years)												
Plains	Organized summer and fall buffalo hunts												
Saint-Albert settlement	Planting (potatoes, barley, some wheat, vegetables)												
	Tending crops and livestock												
Trade and transport	Harvest and haying												
	Miscellaneous domestic industries												
Trade and transport	Pemmican, dried meat, robes, and furs traded to HBC at Edmonton and Saint-Albert												
	Trading furs at native camps												
Trade and transport	Long-distance trade with Red River settlement; St Paul, Minn; Fort Benton, Montana territory												

Prior to 1870 the major concentrations of Métis peoples outside the Red River country were located around missions in the Fort Edmonton area in Alberta District. They included both French Métis, especially at Saint-Albert, Lac-Sainte-Anne, and Lac-la-Biche, and British Métis, especially at Whitefish Lake, Victoria, and Prince Albert. The main groups were primarily buffalo hunters who also planted gardens and engaged in other minor agricultural activities. The most important hunt was the organized 'Edmonton Hunt,' engaged in almost exclusively by French Métis, at times joined by variable numbers of Cree and Assiniboine. An organized hunt was conducted by British Métis out of the Wesleyan mission at Victoria. Other groups represented more extreme adaptations either to nomadism and hunting (the 'hivernants') or to sedentary living and agriculture.



By February 1885 Canada had agreed to fit the irregular lots into portions of the rectangular survey, and to accept certain 'squatters' as homesteaders potentially eligible to claim free grants after three additional years of residence and work on the land. Neither measure met the Métis demand for titles or accommodated families on lands reserved for the Prince Albert Colonization Company. Consequently, the Saint-Laurent Métis formed their own government under Louis Riel - in effect, separating from Canada. Canada's response was to mobilize militia from as far east as Nova Scotia. After a fatal clash between Métis cavalry and Canadian police at Duck Lake on 26 May 1885, several thousand militia were sent west over the financially troubled (still unfinished) Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The swift and successful conclusion of the conflict against the Métis rebels in May was followed by a fresh infusion of subsidy for the CPR in July. With that assistance the railway reached a spectacular conclusion early in November, one week before the hanging of the rebel leader at Regina on 16 Nov 1885.