

COPY OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS ESTABLISHED FOR THE COLONY OF
ST. LAURENT ON THE SASKATCHEWAN.

Public Assembly held on the tenth day of December, 1873, in the winter camp of the Metis established on the Saskatchewan.

The inhabitants of St. Laurent held a public assembly to draw up laws and regulations for the peace and tranquility of their community. In the absence of any form of government among them to administer justice and to judge the differences that may arise among them, they have thought it necessary to choose from among their number a Chief and Councillors invested with power to judge differences and to decide ambiguous questions and matters offending the public interest.

The chief with the members of his Council is elected for one year and during their term of power, the president and the members of council are empowered to judge all cases that shall be brought before them. The chief, by the advice of his Council, can convoke the general assemblies of the public in order to submit for their decision matters of higher consequence, concerning which they would hesitate to pass orders without knowing the opinion of the majority of the public.

It is well understood that in making their laws and regulations the inhabitants of St. Laurent in no way pretend to constitute for themselves an independent state, but the actual situation of the country in which they live, obliges them to take some measures to maintain peace and union amongst them, knowing that so large a society as theirs can exist only under some sort of organisation to preserve mutually their rights, but in forming these laws, they acknowledge themselves as loyal and faithful subjects of Canada, and are ready to abandon their own organisation and to submit to the laws of the Dominion, as soon as Canada shall have established amongst them regular magistrates with a force sufficient to uphold in their country the authority of the law.

In the Assembly held on (blank) on the tenth of December, 1873, in the winter camp, Gabriel Dumont was elected President for one year. The following were chosen as members of Council.

Alexander Hamelin
Baptiste Gurriepy
Pierre Gurriepy
Abraham Montour
Isidore Dumont
Jean Dumont
Moyse Mealet (?)
Baptiste Hamelin

After the election of the president and the members of council, the assembly, on the motion of a certain member expressed a desire that president and members, should take an oath before Father Andre their missionary to faithfully perform their

duties in the honesty of their conscience without conception of anyone and to judge the cases brought before their tribunal. The president and the members consented to take the oath on condition that the persons who had chosen them should likewise swear to support them not only with their votes but also to aid them to maintain the laws they might make and to execute the sentences they might pronounce.

Father Andre having explained to them the nature of the oath, and having made them understand that it was in his capacity of minister of the gospel and not as civil officer that he received their promise to fulfill their engagements, all the members of the assembly came on their knees to (kiss) the Holy Bible, calling the Divine Word to witness their firm resolution to support their laws and according to justice and to punish those who would infringe them.

Article I. On the first Mondays of the month, the president and members of his council shall be obliged to assemble in a house indicated beforehand by the president in order to judge the cases that may be submitted to their arbitration.

II. Any Counsellor who, unless by reason of illness, or impossibility shall not be present at the indicated place shall pay a fine of five Louis.

III. The president, who by his own fault shall not meet his Councillors in the indicated place, shall pay a fine of five Louis.

IV. Any captain refusing to execute the orders that he shall receive in the name of the Council shall pay a fine of three Louis.

V. Any soldier, who shall refuse to execute the orders of his captain shall pay a fine of one Louis and a half.

VI. Any person who shall insult the Council or a member of the Council in the public exercise of his functions shall pay a fine of three louis.

VII. Any person who shall be guilty of contempt of any measure of the Council or of one passed in a general assembly shall pay a fine of one louis.

VIII. Any person wishing to plead shall inform the president beforehand and shall deposit with him, as security, the sum of five shillings.

IX. In every case the plaintiff shall deposit two louis five shillings with the president to remunerate him and the members of the Council for their loss of time but at the termination of the case the person losing it shall pay all the costs and the plaintiff if he (blank) shall receive back the money deposited.

X. Any person who shall call the assembly together shall pay five shillings to the president and to each member, should he come to a compromise with the other side and abandon the prosecution of the case.

XI. Every witness in a case shall receive two and a half shillings a day.

XII. Any case, once brought before the Council, can no longer be judged by any arbitration (blank) the Council.

XIII. Any person judged by the Council, shall be allowed ten days to make arrangements with the person with whom the quarrel is at the expiration of that term the Council shall cause its order to be forcibly executed.

XIV. Any person, who only has three animals, shall not be compelled to give up any one of these in payment of his debt. This clause does not apply to unmarried men who shall be compelled to pay even to the last animal.

XV. Any person who shall be known to have taken another person's horse without permission shall pay a fine of two louis.

XVI. Any contract made without witnesses shall be null and void and its execution cannot be sought for in the Council.

XVII. Any bargain made on a Sunday even before witnesses cannot be prosecuted in court.

XVIII. Any bargain any contract any sale shall be valid, whether in French, English or Indian characters even if made without witnesses, if the plaintiff testifies an oath to the correctness of his account or contract.

XIX. Any affair decided by the Council of St. Laurent shall never be appealed by any of the parties before any other tribunal when the government of Canada shall have placed its regular magistrates in the country, and all persons pleading do it with the knowledge that they promise never to appeal against the decisions given by the Council and no one is permitted to enjoy the privileges of this community except on the express condition of submitting to this law.

XX. Any money contribution shall not exceed one louis and every public tax levied by the Council shall be obligatory for the inhabitants of St. Laurent, and those who shall refuse to submit to the levy shall be liable to pay a fine, the amount of which shall be determined by the Council.

XXI. Any young man, who, under pretense of marriage, shall dishonour a young girl and afterwards refuse to marry her, shall be liable to pay a fine of fifteen louis: This law applies equally to the case of married men dishonouring girls.

XXII. Any person who shall defame the character of another person and shall attack his honour, his virtue or his probity shall be liable to a fine in proportion to the quality and rank of the person attacked or to the degree of injury caused.

XXIII. Any person who shall set fire to the prairie from the 1st August and causes damage shall pay a fine of four louis.

XXIV. On Sundays and obligatory festivals the river ferries shall be free to people riding or driving to church, but any person who shall cross without going to church shall pay as on ordinary days.

XXV. All the horses shall be free, but he whose horse causes injury or annoyance shall be warned and should he not hobble his horse he shall pay a fine of five shillings a day from the time he was warned to look after his horse.

XXVI. If any dogs kill a little foal, the owner of the dogs shall be held responsible for the damage done.

XXVII. Any servant who shall leave his employer before the expiration of the term agreed upon, shall forfeit all right to his wages; in the same way any employer dismissing his servant without proper cause shall pay him his wages in full.

XXVIII. On Sunday no servant shall be obliged to perform any but duties absolutely necessary; however, (blank) occasion, the master can order the servant to look after his horses on Sundays only after the great mass: he shall never prevent him from going to church, at least in the morning.

Public Assembly held at the winter camp of the Metis the Tenth February 1873.

The following resolutions were passed in these Assembly.

Resolution I. In order to put an end to the difficulties that arise concerning the limits and boundaries of lands between neighbours, the Council shall appoint a commission of three competent persons to examine the lands and enquire into the matter: but he who shall have caused the difficulty by wishing to encroach on his neighbour's land shall pay the three commissioners at the rate of five shillings a day.

II. Every chief of a family shall not have the right to take a tract of more than two miles in length and a quarter of a mile in breadth but every chief of a family can take a tract of land for those of his boys who shall have attained the age of twenty years.

III. Every individual shall possess an exclusive right to the hay and wood on his land and which may be found up to the end of the two miles of his claim, and no one shall have the right of cutting wood or hay without the permission of the proprietor.

IV. To have right to a claim, wood must be placed and it must be occupied within six months starting from the present decree at the expiration of this term if the land be not occupied, the firstcomer can take possession of it.

V. In order to prevent the useless destruction of wood, it is decreed that no one shall fell more trees than he can use for work for two weeks, otherwise he shall use (lose) all right to the wood, and should he leave any trees in the wooded tract on the ground without cutting off the brush, the firstcomer can take the wood without the other being able to reclaim it.

VI. Any man who has established himself on a land as fit for cultivation shall not be able to claim another tract of land beyond the limits first, as a land which he reserves on account of the ability which he thinks to draw from it on account of the wood that may be found on that land: the lands solely covered with wood and not fitted for cultivation shall be common to the all inhabitants established at St. Laurent.