

Discussion on the *Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty*

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A first of its kind touted throughout the Métis homeland, featured in mainstream newspapers and in *Le Métis* (an MMF newsletter), the *Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty* was signed on November 30, 2024, by David Chartrand, President of the MMF and Gary Anandasangaree, then-Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, on behalf of the Trudeau Liberals and King Charles. The treaty was built on the 2021 Manitoba Métis *Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement* signed by Carolyn Bennett as the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations on behalf of the Trudeau Liberals and Queen Elizabeth.

If the treaty is ratified and receives Royal Assent, it would recognize the MMF as the government of the Red River Métis—but a few might question whether the MMF does not already serve that function. The answer is yes. However, the treaty would give it powers over its own citizenship and elections. Again, one might wonder whether it already serves that function. And again, the answer is yes. Ultimately, if it receives Royal Assent, the new treaty will give the MMF the power to enact laws, including those on taxation. In the 2025 State of the Nation claimed, President Chartrand claimed that “our Treaty represents the permanent recognition of this relationship by Canada, our Partners in Confederation, and that the relationship is enshrined in the Constitution and protected by it.”

The MMF heralded the treaty as “a launching pad or springboard for negotiating new agreements to increase jurisdictions, planning, decision making and control over programs and services for all departments.” Unfortunately, those rights and responsibilities are not included in the current *Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty*. The MMF admitted that to acquire these jurisdictions and rights, governmental negotiations lasting decades will be required and explained to its citizens that gaining constitutional recognition was paramount.

The ultimate question is whether this is the first time that the Métis have signed a treaty with the Government of Canada? The answer is no. The late Lawrence Barkwell, an MMF historian, documented the harsh reality of changing winds in the Canadian government impacting the

Métis. In 1875, surveyor Thomas Stoughton Dennis, on behalf of Canada, signed a Memorandum Agreement with the Métis of Rainy Lake. The *Half-Breed Adhesion to Treaty No. 3* stipulated two reserves, annuity payments, cattle, and farm implements for Métis. Despite negotiating and signing that treaty, the Canadian government never ratified it, and the Métis never received the land, money, or equipment. The political landscape changed between signing and ratifying the agreement. When it was signed, Alexander Mackenzie was prime minister, but by the time for ratification emerged, leadership had returned to Sir John A. Macdonald. Despite over a decade of Métis protesting and petitioning the honoring of the agreement, the federal government considered the matter closed.

Fast forward to 2024: the *Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty* is signed by a representative of the Trudeau Liberals but is not presented to the House of Commons for ratification before Parliament is dissolved. The incoming 45th Parliament features a minority government under Mark Carney, and its first session closed on December 12, 2025. Over a year has passed since the treaty was signed. Changing winds in the Canadian government are being felt by Indigenous nations across the country, with Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act, fast-tracked and passed despite widespread Indigenous opposition, and the stalling of over 50 self-government agreements negotiated with the Trudeau Liberals. There is a question of how Carney's Liberals will react to the Dakota Tipi First Nation and Canupawakpa Dakota Nation demanding that the courts find the new treaty invalid by filing a motion in Manitoba's Court of Kings Bench. In 1875, changes in government and public perception led elected officials to ignore a signed agreement.

Should Métis be worried that the *Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty* will have the same fate as the *Half-Breed Adhesion to Treaty No. 3*? The most recent session of Parliament ran for over six months, from May to December 2025, and the *Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty* was never on the order paper. There has been no public indication from Prime Minister Mark Carney or Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Rebecca Alty of when it is to be discussed. At the 2025 Annual General Assembly, President Chartrand reassured the Métis nation, who have waited over a year to see the minority Liberal government ratify the agreement, by saying that "the Treaty will be introduced this fall. We got the Bloc on our side. We got the NDP and we got the Liberals. So, without question, you got the vote." Obviously, the treaty was not introduced before Parliament rose for the holidays. Only time will tell if 2026 will bring action, or whether today's Métis will be forced to wait, as was the case for the Rainy Lake Métis.