

A HISTORY OF EDUCATION  
IN THE  
EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION

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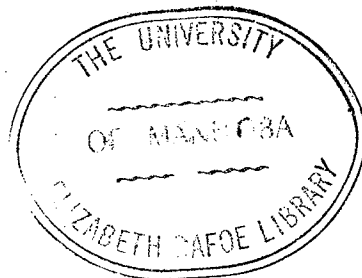
A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of Education  
The University of Manitoba

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
John C. Gottfried  
October 1965



FLIN FLON  
N° 46



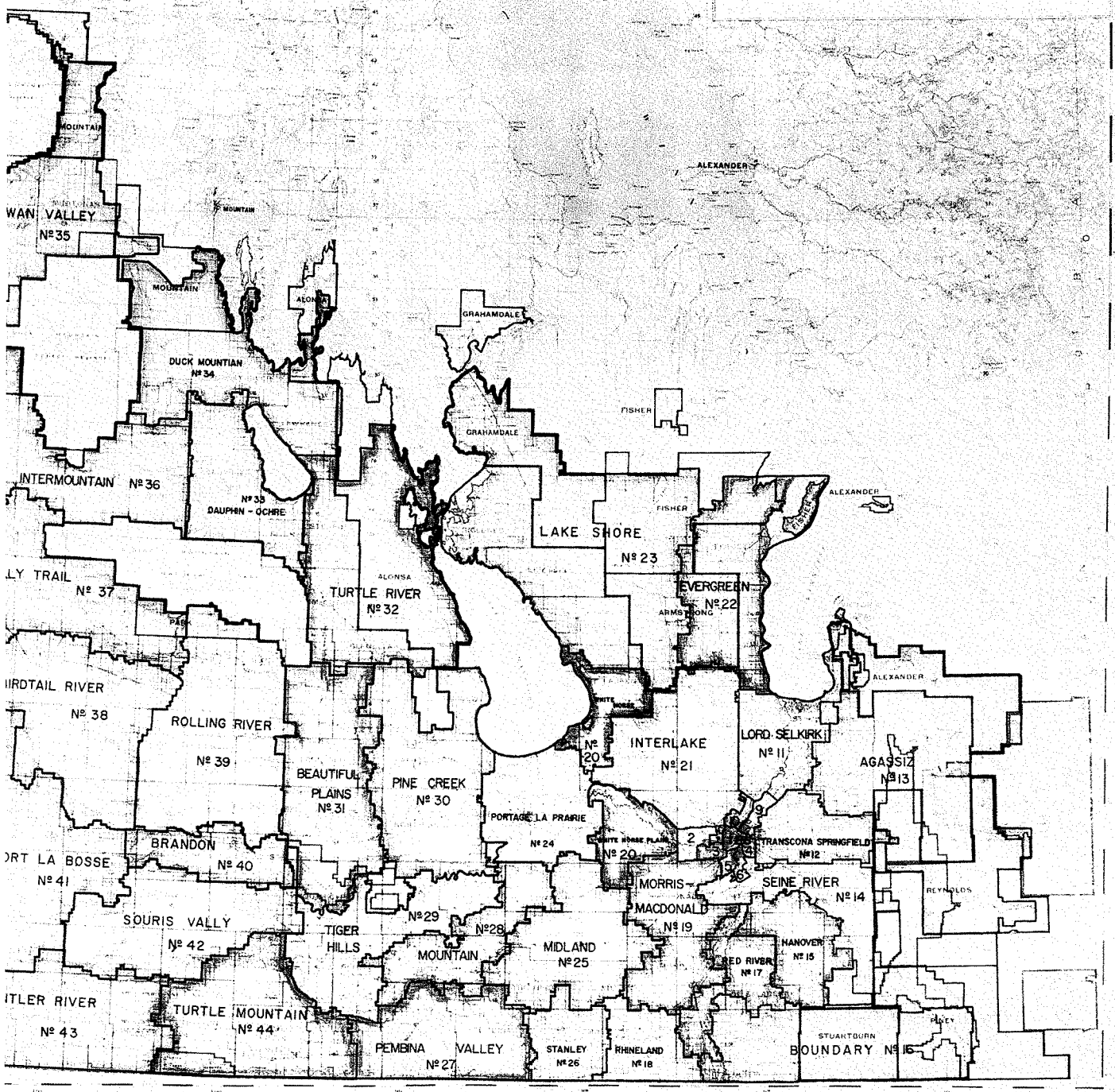
Department of Mines & Natural Resources Manitoba  
Surveys Branch

THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE  
PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

1956

Scale: 8 Miles to One Inch

SHEWING  
SCHOOL DIVISIONS



# THE EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION N° 22

WARD BOUNDARIES - - - - -

TOTAL TRUSTEES : 6

WARDS-1,2,3,5, — ONE TRUSTEE EACH

WARD-4, — TWO TRUSTEES

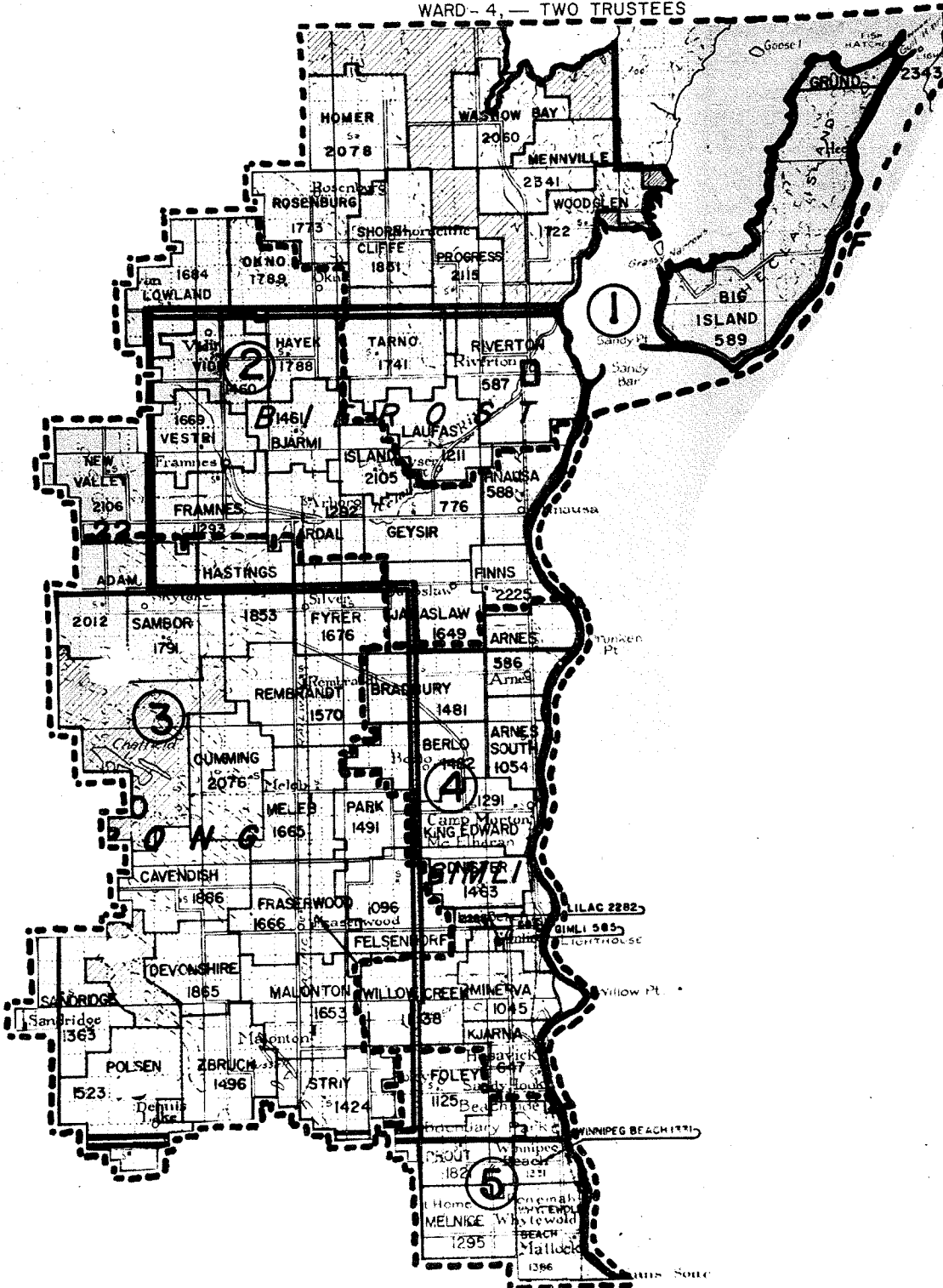


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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study is to document the chief contributions made towards the growth and development of education by the many racial groups that emigrated into the area now within the boundaries of the Evergreen School Division. Chief amongst these groups are the settlers of Icelandic descent in their principal area of settlement outside of Iceland, and those who had emigrated from Eastern Europe. In recent years a Mennonite colony has been established in the north portion of the Division.

Equal in importance but secondary to the main purpose will be an attempt to indicate significant factors in the cultural and religious background of each ethnic group, and to relate these to their contributions toward the historic development and growth of education in the province.

Consideration will also be given to the school system as a force for the unification and assimilation of Canadians as exemplified by the forces at work in the Division.

#### I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The history of the settlement, and the history of the development of education in the Evergreen School Division both divide readily into two separate periods marked by the year 1897. In the history of settlement, the first settlers were almost exclusively Icelandic until

the original agreement for the establishment of New Iceland was rescinded on July 30, 1897.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, the immigrants from Eastern Europe began to arrive.<sup>2</sup> These newcomers from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were primarily tillers of the soil, in contrast to the settlers from Iceland, who were mainly fishermen. The year 1897, therefore, marks the beginning of an effort to convert the frontier wilderness into an agricultural region with well-tended homesteads and thriving country villages.

As for the history of development of education, of major significance was the fact that the Icelanders upheld the Protestant religion, while the immigrants from Eastern Europe were adherents of the Catholic Faith. The time of arrival of the latter coincided with the temporary settlement of the Manitoba School Question through the Laurier-Greenway Compromise of 1897. With the Protestants in the majority and not favourably disposed towards the Catholics,<sup>3</sup> the Icelandic settlers were able to effect a more satisfactory transition from their church-related schools into the Manitoba Public School system. Professor W. L. Morton, of the University of Manitoba, comments in his history of this province that the Manitoba School Question was certainly concluded to the satisfaction of the Protestant majority. Thus, in any chronicle of the growth and development of education in the Evergreen School Division,

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<sup>1</sup>Canada Gazette, October 9, 1897. p. 652.

<sup>2</sup>W. L. Morton, Manitoba -- A History: University of Toronto Press, 1937. p. 254.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. pp. 240-250.

1897 must be considered a crucial year marked by the occurrence of a number of historically significant events.

The original Icelandic settlement was a homogeneous unit. For the first twelve years the Icelanders lived under their own constitution, in theory, in the Republic of New Iceland. Consequently, the history of this Republic is a history of the beginning of the Icelandic settlement in Manitoba.<sup>4</sup>

After the arrival of the Eastern Europeans near the turn of the century, the nature of the settlement altered to become multi-racial in composition. These immigrants were descended from three main racial extractions, namely: (1) German, (2) Polish, and (3) Ukrainian.<sup>5</sup> All were united in their common Austro-Hungarian background, but divided in their loyalties to their different cultural and racial traditions. The settlements they established reflected these varied loyalties and followed no one set pattern. Only in a few districts did racial loyalties result in completely homogeneous settlements. By far the majority of the districts now represent a commingling of the cultural and racial elements.

The methods employed by the Federal and Provincial authorities in the settlement of each racial group has had a profound effect on its assimilation and resulting contribution toward a common Canadian culture. The settlers from Iceland were granted an exclusive area for settlement,

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<sup>4</sup>W. L. Morton, op. cit., pp. 162-163.

<sup>5</sup>Edward M. Hubicz, Polish Churches in Manitoba. Veritas: 1960 pp. 23-33.

in which they were permitted the use of their language, customs, and traditions without restriction. This freedom gave them the opportunity to adjust to the new environment and consolidate their position as a distinctly different group. On the other hand, the settlers from Eastern Europe were subjected to external pressures for their assimilation almost from the time of their arrival in a strange and new land. The dual Catholic and Protestant school system had been replaced by a non-sectarian public school system which severely restricted the exercise of their duties as Catholic parents towards their children.<sup>6</sup> When English was made the sole language of instruction in the Public Schools as a result of anti-German agitation during World War I, it placed an additional burden upon Canadian settlers who had transferred their allegiance from the land of their birth to that of their choice. As a result of these restrictions, many settlers from Eastern Europe made no attempt to preserve the heritage or retain the customs of a land they had forsaken, but began working towards a new identity as Canadians. While some began to harbour deep feelings of resentment towards those who would infringe upon what they considered to be their basic civil rights, others sought to merge their identity with the Canadian scene through the adoption of English customs, language, and surnames. Most tried not to consider themselves as hyphenated Canadians, but were required to retain this form of identification until 1947 when the passage of

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<sup>6</sup>Brief, (Presented to the Manitoba Legislature by the Manitoba Association for Equality in Education, November 10, 1964). pp. 5-11.

the Citizenship Act by the Federal Government removed this last obstacle to a more complete participation in Canadian citizenship.

## II. A GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF EVERGREEN DIVISION

The Evergreen School Division is located on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, and extends fifty-four miles in length from its most southerly point at Sans Souci to its northern extremity at Washow Bay. Its eastern boundary follows the shoreline and includes Hecla Island. The other three sides are shaped by the contours of the many school districts which are located along its perimeter. It has an average width of about twenty miles.

Forming part of the Interlake area, this mixed-farming and summer resort region holds many attractions for both permanent settlers and holiday seekers. As part of the Parkland Belt north of the Prairie region, it offers a varied and colourful landscape to the enjoyment of hunter, camper, or picnicker. While soil conditions are generally more suited for hayland and pasture, a considerable amount of grain farming is carried on. Dairying and the raising of beef cattle provide the main source of income. The Lake, which abounds with fish, provides a source of livelihood for the commercial fishermen as well as many hours of pleasure for the anglers.

The area is serviced by three paved highways and two railway lines. Although the railway service has been curtailed considerably in the past ten years, it fills a vital role in supplying fuel oils and heavy equipment for the Royal Canadian Air Force Station near Gimli and

for the surrounding district. Highways 7, 8, and 9, lead northward from Winnipeg to all the main centres and summer resorts.

The four major centres are: Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Arborg, and Riverton. Of these, Gimli is the largest with a population of one thousand, nine hundred and sixty permanent residents as revealed in the 1964 census. To this figure may be added the many summer resort residents and the R.C.A.F. personnel who use the shopping and recreational facilities of the town. The beaches at Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Hecla, Camp Morton, and the numerous Fresh Air Camps located along the lakeshore attract thousands of visitors during the holiday season.

### III. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any detailed history of education must entail more than the mere compilation of facts gleaned from the records contained in the provincial archives, school registers, and the minutes of school board meetings. A living history must include something of the setting and the background of the people by whom the schools were established and developed. The history would then be incomplete if it did not contain an account of major legislative enactments governing this growth and relating it to the provincial school system. These, then are the factors limiting the scope of this thesis.

Since the emphasis is to be placed on the historical rather than the pedagogical aspects of educational development, such factors as changes in the course of study, and teaching methods employed will be dealt with only as they relate to the growth and development of the

educational system as a whole.

A true comparison of the educational opportunities provided in each of the elementary schools within the Division is difficult to make because of the great disparity in taxation powers existing amongst the many administrative units. Uniformity exists in the secondary schools under the administration of the Evergreen School Division, however, at the elementary level the situation is quite different. When the Division was formed there were sixty-two elementary school districts in operation. In 1960, three school districts: (1) Striy S. D. 1424, (2) Zbruch S. D. 1496, and (3) Polsen S. D. 1523, withdrew and united with Interlake School Division No. 21. Eight school districts are administered by Mr. J. A. Cameron, the Official Trustee for the Department of Education. Administration is further complicated by the fact that within the boundaries of the Division lie the Rural Municipalities of Gimli and Bifrost; part of the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews; and the Local Government Districts of Armstrong and Fisher, each with a different taxation base and consequently varying ability to support a uniform educational system. This study will make no attempt to relate the educational opportunities provided in each elementary school district to its ability to support.

Recent changes proposed by the Department of Education and contained in the Michener Report to the Manitoba Legislature encourage consolidation of the elementary schools in the Division and the assumption of responsibility for raising taxes and administrative



control by the Division Board.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV. SOURCES OF DATA

Primary sources of information have been resorted to wherever possible throughout the compilation of the historical events contained in this thesis. The writer has frequently relied on his personal knowledge of the district; since it is the area in which his forefathers settled and in which he has resided for almost thirty years. The results of a questionnaire circulated in November, 1964, and numerous personal visits to the elementary schools throughout the Division to view the old school registers have proved an invaluable source of information.

Secondary sources of information have been relied upon for an account of the early development of the schools. While a number of works dealing with the area have been published, these refer, in the main, to the first settlers from Iceland. One of the more detailed accounts is to be found in Volume III of the series entitled Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi written by Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, and published in the Icelandic language by the Columbia Press in Winnipeg. Translations from this source have provided a detailed background for that portion of the thesis which deals specifically with contributions made by the settlers of Icelandic descent. The historical collections of Miss Margaret Sveinson, who has devoted much time and effort to the

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<sup>7</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 15, April 9, 1965. p. 1.

compilation of historical facts about the Gimli district, have also been used.

There is almost a complete lack of publications or manuscripts dealing with the settlements begun by the settlers from Eastern Europe, and what can be found deals briefly with the area under consideration. Until recently, a number of the original settlers who arrived at the turn of the century were still living; however, this source of reliable first-hand information is now fast diminishing.

Generally, the writer's background as a long-time resident and teacher in the area under consideration; a study of the early Icelandic works on the subject; the further study of recently published works such as: Ukrainians in Manitoba, by Paul Yuzik; and Manitoba--A History, by W. L. Morton; augmented by recent scholarly works and briefs on educational thought and trends, have combined to present a fairly accurate picture of the History of Education in the Evergreen School Division.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SETTLEMENT

The school may be considered as an institution created by Society to assist the child and adolescent to assume an acceptable adult role. The school is, therefore, an integral part of the society that has created it, and is profoundly affected by the cultural heritage and the natural and acquired aptitudes of the members within it. The type of schooling offered, and the teaching methods employed are a reflection of the cultural elements at work in the district.

In any history of the growth and development of education in a specific area, consideration should be given to the various cultural forces and their influence on the two main functions of education. These functions are: (1) the perpetuating function, and (2) the change-promoting function. The former is intimately interwoven with the cultural heritage of the society and resists change. The latter is used as the medium for facilitating and accelerating social change. When the cultural heritage and social stratification of a society are rigidly adhered to, the perpetuating function is emphasized to promote social stability. This may act to restrict educational growth and development in a period of rapid social change.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to acquaint the reader with the background of the main cultures that have combined to contribute towards the development of education in the Evergreen School Division.

## I. EARLY HISTORY OF THE AREA

The tract of land which is now included within the boundaries of the Evergreen School Division first passed from the rule of the native Indians to that of the whiteman on May 2, 1670. Charles II, influenced by the stories told by two French explorers, Groseilliers and Radisson, granted a Royal Charter for the establishment of a company with his cousin Prince Rupert at the head. To this newly-formed company of "Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay" was given full ownership of all the lands, whose waters drained into Hudson Bay, that were reached through Hudson Strait, and a monopoly of all trade in that area. This vast holding eventually became known as Rupert's Land.<sup>1</sup>

Located on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg and along the margin of one of the main water transportation routes from Hudson's Bay into the interior, the strip of land that was to become the Evergreen School Division, remained for many years the exclusive domain of wandering Indian tribes and fur traders. The establishment of permanent settlements was not in the best interests of the Company and was discouraged.

Thomas Douglas, who in 1799 became the Earl of Selkirk, became the first man to put into execution the daring and humanitarian plan of establishing a permanent settlement at the "Forks".<sup>2</sup> In so doing, he desired not only to provide a place of refuge for the destitute and

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar McInnis, Canada, A Political and Social History: Rinehart, 1954. pp. 91-92.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

depressed Scottish crofters and Irish immigrants, but also to enhance the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company, by using the colony as a curb to the westward expansion of its only rival in the fur trade, the North-West Trading Company. With his great wealth he was able to purchase sufficient shares to give himself a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company. He then purchased a huge tract of land in the region of the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, one hundred and sixteen thousand square miles in area. In 1812, two parties of immigrants arrived via the Hudson's Bay route to lay the foundation of the first permanent settlement in Lord Selkirk's vast holding.<sup>3</sup>

In 1834 the Selkirk heirs abandoned their interest in the settlement. The region was sold back to the Hudson's Bay Company which organized it into the District of Assiniboia under a governor and appointed council.<sup>4</sup>

After Confederation in 1867, the Canadian statesmen of the four Eastern Provinces continued their efforts to establish a greater Dominion. Prior to the Union, the colonists at Red River had expressed the wish to have a government of their own rather than to be ruled by a company. The young Dominion, therefore, lost little time in initiating negotiations for the acquisition of the vast territory of Rupert's Land.<sup>5</sup> Their efforts were successful and in 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company

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<sup>3</sup>Edgar McInnis, loc. cit., p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>Edgar McInnis, op. cit., p. 266-270.

<sup>5</sup>Edgar McInnis, op. cit., pp. 307-309.

relinquished its control of the area for the sum of \$1,500,000. while retaining its trading posts and the land in the immediate vicinity, as well as two sections in each township. With this transaction concluded, the Dominion was in an excellent position to realize its dream of a united colony extending across a continent.

When, in 1870, the Province of Manitoba was incorporated, it had an assumed area of 13,928 square miles. It was rectangular in shape; one hundred and twenty miles from east to west, and one hundred and ten miles north and south from the American boundary to a line running parallel through Boundary Creek. The population recorded in the 1871 census shows a total of about 25,000. Approximately 12,000 of these were white or part-white. There were more French-speaking Roman Catholics than English-speaking Protestants.<sup>6</sup> The main portion of what is now the Evergreen School Division lay north of the Manitoba boundary in the newly-formed District of Keewatin in the North West Territories.

## II. THE ICELANDIC SETTLEMENTS

Early Icelandic migrations. The Icelanders are descendants of the Nordic race. They have inherited the culture of Norway and preserved it in their new homes in Iceland.

Much of their early achievements are recorded in the great literary works -- the Icelandic Sagas and Eddas.<sup>7</sup> The historical

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<sup>6</sup>C. E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada. Toronto: W. J. Gage and Company, 1957. pp. 151-152.

<sup>7</sup>Roy H. Ruth, Educational Echoes. Winnipeg: Columbia Press Ltd., 1964. pp. 10-11.

accounts of those early days reveal that about the year 1000 A.D., Lief Ericsson sailed westward from Norway, via Scotland, the Faroes, Iceland and then Greenland, to discover Markland and Helluland on the East Coast of Canada which we now call Labrador.<sup>8</sup> Recent scientific explorations confirm the authenticity of these early writings which relate further that Lief Ericsson, with his brothers Thorvaldr and Thorsteinn, travelled between Greenland, Labrador, and Vineland which is thought to be farther south along the Atlantic coast. Here, in the year 1101 A.D., the first white child was born in what is now North America. His mother was Gudridr, the widow of Lief's brother Thorsteinn, who had married an Icelander, Thor Karlsefni. They called the infant Snorri.

Tryggvi J. Oleson, while a Professor of History at the University of Manitoba, devoted considerable research to the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the Icelandic settlement in Greenland during the eleventh century. He contends that the Icelanders who settled Greenland were primarily farmers -- the climate wasn't as forbidding as it is today. They went north to hunt for seal and walrus; west for timber. In the northern region they met and traded with the native aborigines whom they called Skraelings. These nomadic inhabitants of the north were short, dark-skinned, and quite unlike the present-day Eskimo. Although the Nordic Icelanders brought Christianity and their own culture with them, they eventually succumbed to the Arctic environment.

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<sup>8</sup>Winnipeg Free Press, May 8, 1965. p. 5.

Between the Eleventh and the Sixteenth centuries they gradually abandoned the Greenland settlements, as the climate became more severe. Through intermarriage with the Skraelings, a nomadic race of people, inhabiting the Canadian Arctic evolved. Their descendants are now believed to be the present-day Eskimo.

Settlements during the nineteenth century. The latter part of the nineteenth century was a period of many difficulties for the Icelandic people. The feeling of nationalism and liberalism kept Iceland in almost constant political dispute with Denmark. The Danish officials refused to grant the demands of the Icelanders and the economic weapon was used to check political activity. Industries were backward, and agriculture consisted almost entirely of sheep raising. Fishing, the other primary industry, also presented great difficulties mainly in that the fishing vessels were small, dangerous, and not suitable for long voyages from shore. The hazards of frequent volcanic eruptions, combined with the factors already mentioned to produce a hard life with an uncertain future. Migration promised wider opportunities.

While there are records of Icelanders establishing a colony at Spanish Fork in Utah as early as 1855,<sup>9</sup> and of further settlements throughout the United States during the next eighteen years, it was not until almost twenty years later than one turned northward and migrated to Canada. He was Sigtryggur Jonasson, who visited

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<sup>9</sup>Roy H. Ruth, op. cit., p. 15.



Southern Ontario in 1872. He must have been favourably impressed by what he saw, and his reports of opportunities for settlement must have been encouraging, because out of the next group of one hundred and fifty emigrants to leave Akureyri, Iceland on August 4, 1873, some came to Rosseau, Ontario in the Muskoka Lakes district. The following year, a large contingent of settlers left Iceland on September 23, bound for Kinmount, Ontario. Both Kinmount and Rosseau were located on the main overland route to the West. An immigration building in Rosseau provided temporary accommodations for the settlers. Some Icelanders remained in the district and began the village of Hekkla. These two waves of migration later provided the nucleus for the band of colonists who then formed the first permanent Icelandic settlement in North America on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.<sup>10</sup>

The settlements in Ontario did not prosper; and, as the memories of the extreme poverty and hardships endured in their homeland receded into the background, the realities of their present plight became more evident. That they were not making the most of their opportunities in a new and great Dominion was painfully apparent. A reappraisal of their situation revealed that the area selected for settlement afforded little in the way of special inducements to their inherent potentialities. The best homesteads had been taken, and what remained could not provide more than a mere subsistence standard of living for a people unaccustomed to an intensive cultivation of the soil. The only alternative

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<sup>10</sup>John K. Laxdal, "Gimli Celebrates 75th Anniversary," Lake Winnipeg Argus, August 8, 1950. p. 4.

was to seek permanent employment. The area, however, afforded opportunities only for seasonal and casual labour as farm hands, lumber mill workers, or railway construction. All provided small remuneration with little or no chance for promotion. Unwilling to accept or adapt to these conditions, the Kinmount group prevailed upon John Taylor and Sigtryggur Jonasson to approach the Federal Government at Ottawa to grant a restricted area of settlement for the exclusive use of the Icelanders in the Canadian West. The group wished to form a separate colony in which they could retain their identity and preserve their language, customs, and cultural heritage.

Problems of resettlement. The Government at Ottawa was most sympathetic to their appeal for assistance and agreed to finance an exploratory trip for the two representatives to the Red River Valley. John Taylor was appointed as Icelandic Agent by the Canadian government. Accompanied by representatives of the colonists headed by Sigtryggur Jonasson, he arrived in Winnipeg on July 16, 1875. After considering several localities in the Red River Valley region, they decided against settling in that area because of the recent grasshopper plague and their inability to locate an unbroken parcel of land large enough to serve their purposes. The site on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg was finally chosen. Among the many advantages favouring this location was the existence of a plentiful supply of fish in the waters of the Lake, and although not heavily wooded, the land offered a supply of logs for fuel and lumber for the construction of homes with sufficiently numerous

meadows offering ample hay and pasture for cattle and sheep. The location appeared ideally suited for the establishment of a settlement that would be primarily dependent for its livelihood upon the fishing industry supplemented by agricultural products.<sup>11</sup>

On their return to Ottawa, the leaders reported their findings, and sought aid to move the colonists. The proceeds from the sale of their few possessions did not realize sufficient capital for such an undertaking. Many of the families were destitute. Their request brought unforeseen obstacles, for while the Dominion Government had the authority to attract and help finance immigration to Canada, there was no provision, nor precedent, which gave it the authority to furnish funds to transplant a colony from one location to another within the country. However, through the intercession of Lord Dufferin, the Dominion Government was prevailed upon to provide financial assistance not only for the move but also to make additional loans available during the period of readjustment.

After successfully concluding these negotiations with the government, the emissaries returned to Kinmount in Muskoka County to make preparations for their trek to the West.

When the arrangements for transportation had been completed, the colonists met at Toronto, whence they travelled by train to Sarnia and then by boat to Duluth. There, they were joined by a small group who had formerly settled in Minnesota. After a short overland journey

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<sup>11</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi. Vol. II. Winnipeg: Columbia Press, 1943. pp. 327-328.

to Fisher's Landing on the Red River, the party boarded the steamer "International" then plying back and forth between Winnipeg and the Minnesota towns located along the Red River. The landing was made in Winnipeg at the old Alexander St. Dock on October 11, 1875. On Sunday morning, October 17, the Icelanders began their journey northward down the Red River on huge barges purchased for that purpose at Winnipeg. The barges were unmanageable and when they drifted from the river into the open waters of the lake, many feared that all would be drowned should a storm approach. The captain of the lake freighter "Colville" noticed their predicament and offered to take them in tow. The water was calm until they reached Willow Point, where, because of the lateness of the season and the arrival of winter weather, the skipper would not take them farther.

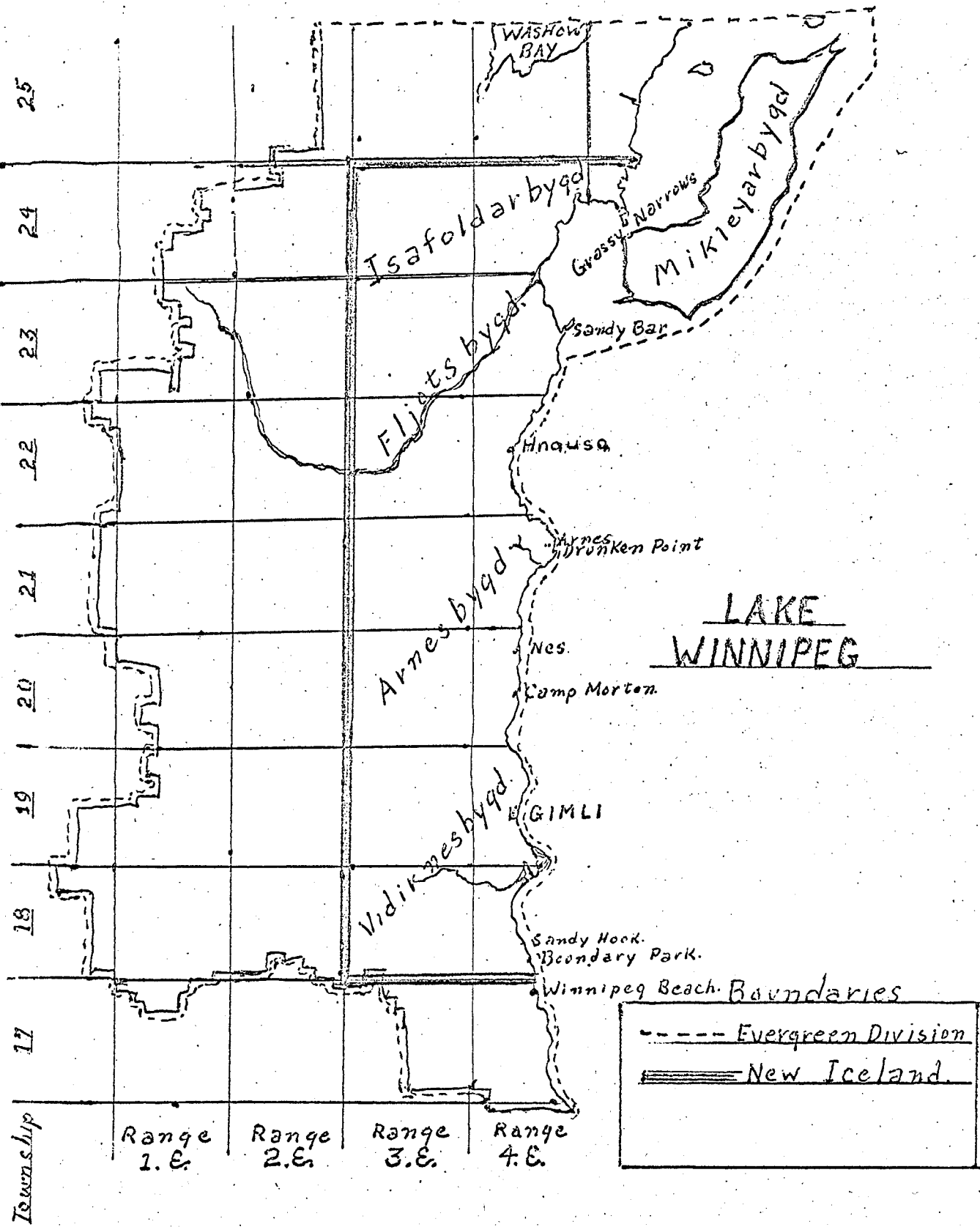
The original intention of the colonists had been to establish a settlement farther north in the region of the Icelandic River. The unexpected turn of events, however, prompted them to revise their plans. They decided to drop anchor off Willow Point. Thus, Gimli, Keewatin became the site of the first Icelandic village in the Canadian West. They had arrived at their destination on October 22, 1875.<sup>12</sup>

New Iceland. On October 8, 1875, the tract of land that came to be known as New Iceland was set aside as a reserve for Icelanders by an Order-in-Council of the Dominion Government. The conditions for agreement between the Canadian officials and the representatives of the

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<sup>12</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., pp. 345-346.

# NEW ICELAND



LAKE WINNIPEG

-----	Evergreen Division
====	New Iceland

settlers included the following stipulations:

1. The settlers were to enjoy full liberty and rights of citizenship at once on the same terms as native Canadians.
2. A sufficiently large and suitable tract of land for a colony was to be granted to them.
3. They were to preserve unhindered their personal rights, their language, and their nationality for themselves and for their descendants forever.

A photostat of the original agreement now kept in the Dominion Archives may be viewed in the library of the Betel Old Folks Home at Gimli.

The above mentioned conditions of settlement were not unique since similar concessions had previously been made to the German Mennonites in Southern Manitoba. A precedent, however, which represented a complete departure from previous immigration policy, was set when the Dominion Government provided loans for the relocation of settlers and for the initial period of readjustment in New Iceland. The total amount of loans granted by the Dominion Government from the arrival of the Icelandic settlers on the last day of summer in 1875 to the same date in 1877, amounted to \$80,000. At the time it represented a considerable amount of purchasing power. Interest was not charged until January 1, 1897, and the rate was set at six per cent. This concession was secured for the settlers through the intercession of their patron, Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada.<sup>13</sup>

The legal description of the land grant was given in the original

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<sup>13</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., p. 44.

agreement as that area bounded "to the south, by the northern boundary of the Province of Manitoba; to the north by the Seventh Base Line; to the east by Lake Winnipeg; and to the west, by the eastern boundary of the Second Range East of the Principal Meridian; embracing Townships numbers 18 to 24 inclusive in the Third and Fourth Range East; also Big Black Island and the small islands lying between it and the said course as indicated by red border on the map accompanying this memorandum." In 1877, Township 24 was added to the settlement.

A government survey completed in 1877 showed that the settlement of New Iceland contained an area of three hundred and twenty-four square miles excluding Township 24. It was thirty-six miles long, eight miles wide at the narrowest point, and eleven at the broadest. Section lines were cut around each square mile, and markers were left to show how to divide it into four farms.<sup>14</sup>

Three Townships were also surveyed. Gimli was one mile long along the lakeshore, and a half mile wide; Sandy Bar, a half mile long and a quarter mile wide; and Lundi, three miles from the mouth of the Icelandic River, was the same size as Sandy Bar.

At the time of its formation, New Iceland was a part of the North-West Territories in the District of Keewatin which was under the administration of the Lieutenant-Governor and Council of Manitoba. The following year the Province ceased administering in the Territories. By a Federal Act of 1881, the Province of Manitoba was enlarged to the area long designated as the "postage stamp province". In that year its

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<sup>14</sup>Thorstein Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., p. 42.

total area was increased from about 13,500 square miles to 73,956 square miles. Although the Manitoba Municipalities Act of the same year recognized already existing municipal governments in the new area as legal entities, the legal status of New Iceland within the Province necessitated clarification in the light of Dominion-Provincial responsibilities for education and other necessary services as set forth in the British North America Act of 1867. As a result, the Manitoba Municipalities Act was amended in 1886, and the Icelanders placed themselves completely under the jurisdiction of the Province of Manitoba. The schools in New Iceland came under the regulations of the Manitoba Education Act in 1887. Ten years later the original agreement for the creation of the Icelandic settlement was rescinded by a Federal Order-in-Council dated July 30, 1897. It was recommended that the remaining homesteads in New Iceland be made available for settlement to anyone desiring to settle in the area.<sup>15</sup>

The Icelandic republic. Shortly after their arrival in New Iceland, the attention of the settlers was given to the provision of government and good order. At first, this responsibility was delegated to a Council of five men elected on January 4, 1876. However, due to an influx of twelve hundred settlers in late August, the settlers soon found it necessary to create a much larger body endowed with complete powers of government. On January 22, a meeting was held at Gimli to draft a temporary constitution, and on January 26, another was

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<sup>15</sup>Roy H. Ruth, op. cit., p. 19.



held in the Icelandic River settlement to elect a five-man committee for the same purpose. A public meeting of the entire colony was then called on February 5, 1877 to draw up a constitution for New Iceland. As a result, New Iceland was divided into four wards with elected Councils to look after the affairs of each. The names of the wards were: Vidirnesbygd, Arnesbygd, Fljotsbygd, and Mikleybygd. A fifth ward, Isafoldarbygd, was established when Township 24 was added to the settlement. Each ward contained approximately one hundred square miles. The temporary agreement lasted until January 11, 1878 when the delegates from all wards met to adopt the Constitution of New Iceland. Three days later it was published in the Icelandic paper, Framfari, (The Progressive).<sup>16</sup>

Democratic procedures were followed throughout the entire discussions leading to the adoption of the Constitution. The entire draft submitted by the delegates from the Icelandic River settlement was finally adopted with minor revisions. Sigtryggur Jonasson became the first Governor of the Republic. The delegates had expected to have the Constitution submitted to Ottawa for ratification before the opening of parliament on February 10. There is no information available that it was ever ratified.

The Constitution of New Iceland made no provision for education in the colony or the apprehension, detention, and punishment of criminals. While this may appear as a serious omission on the part of

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<sup>16</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., pp. 71-78

those delegated with the responsibility, the matters had not escaped their attention. Education in the colony was the responsibility of the home and the church. The Constitution had provided for the erection of a community hall in each ward of the colony. Apparently, the first public buildings were intended to serve as churches, but were used on occasion also as schools as well as community halls. Matters of crime prevention were regarded as the responsibility of the community in general.

New Iceland was a Republic in theory only. In reality, it remained under the control of the Canadian Government until 1881 in all things except local matters. Thereafter it was governed by the Province of Manitoba and the Canadian Government. In 1887, the colony passed under the complete jurisdiction of the government of Manitoba.

### III. THE ARRIVAL OF THE EASTERN EUROPEANS

The majority of the Eastern Europeans who migrated into the Evergreen Division came from the section of Europe east of the Caucasus Mountains and in the region of the Dniester River.

Amongst the early arrivals were those from the ill-fated and sorely tried country of Poland. Beginning in 1772 the country had been subjected to repeated conquests by her neighbours, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Following each defeat, the victorious Powers partitioned the land and proceeded to occupy the provinces each had arrogated. By 1795, Poland had been erased from the map of Europe. The rise to power of Napoleon in France offered a ray of hope for the

re-unification of Poland. Polish nationalists sought service in Napoleon's army and led an attack on Warsaw in 1812. Little was achieved, for after Napoleon's defeat and the Congress of Vienna, the victorious Powers again partitioned Poland.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the southern provinces of what had been Poland consisted of a patchwork of Polish, German, and Ukrainian communities all loyal to one sovereign, Franz-Joseph of Austria, yet stoutly maintaining their own cultural characteristics and traditions. Each group strove to maintain its identity, and was accorded preferential treatment by the authorities as the fortunes of war favoured their country of origin.

The majority of the settlers from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were self-supporting and received little government assistance to establish themselves in the new land. While they were extremely poor, they preferred to manage on their own resources. Pride and a strong feeling of independence combined to make them refuse charity or relief. Most were deeply religious and devout Catholics. These immigrants sought in Canada a new home with a stable government, equality in civil rights, and the opportunity of earning an easier livelihood.

The Canadian immigration policy. The ability of the new Dominion to attract and retain settlers was considerably restricted by the inducement of greater prospects for material advancement offered by her

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<sup>17</sup> Edward M. Hubicz, Polish Churches in Manitoba. London: Veritas Foundation Publication Centre, 1960, pp. 23-33.

neighbour to the south. The presence of rich soil within easy access of permanent markets, located in regions with relatively mild winters in comparison with those found in Canada, exercised a magnetic attraction on the land-hungry immigrants until the later decades of the twentieth century. Then a return tide of immigration was directed northward to the Canadian West.

Several factors both national and international in scope combined to produce this result. The Dominion revised its immigration policy and embarked on an aggressive campaign to attract farmers and domestic servants. Canadian agents were sent into the British Isles and the United States to proclaim the advantage of settlement in Canada. Since the governments of continental Europe looked with disfavour on any attempts to induce their citizens to emigrate, the North Atlantic Trading Company<sup>18</sup> was organized in 1899 to secure immigrants who were in the preferred category, i.e. agriculturists, farm labourers, or domestic servants. The company was generously assisted with government funds. It operated successfully until 1910, when its contract was revoked. Other factors influencing Canada's immigration policy were the fast developing shortage of good agricultural land, and an attempt to thwart any designs the United States might have had towards the annexation of the fertile prairie region in retaliation for the assistance the British had rendered to the Southern States during the American Civil War.

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<sup>18</sup>D. C. Harvey, The Colonization of Canada. Toronto: Clarke Irwin and Company Ltd., 1936. pp. 138-140.

The earliest arrivals to Manitoba were attracted by the deep fertile soil to be found in the Red River Valley. Within a short time, however, the better homesteads were all taken and the footsteps of the pioneers were directed to the north where suitable land was still to be had. The prospect of locating in the already established area of New Iceland attracted many. A government road had been constructed from one end of the colony to the other, and to the west of it lay many new and abandoned homesteads. In such a setting, the adjustments to pioneer life would be somewhat alleviated by being adjacent to a settled community.

Eastern European settlements. Records reveal that the first immigrants from Poland arrived at the Red River Colony in 1817.<sup>19</sup> These were soldiers who had volunteered in Napoleon's army of liberation for Poland. Later they were taken prisoner by the British, and, as a condition for their release, had volunteered for duty in the colonies. They were at Kingston in Upper Canada when Lord Selkirk was organizing an expedition to the Red River Colony and became part of the military escort. They were ten in number and most of them migrated to the United States following the disastrous flood of 1826. One settler of Polish descent was recorded in the census of 1849.

Austrian immigrants of Polish origin began to arrive in Manitoba in considerable numbers after 1883.<sup>20</sup> They made their first

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<sup>19</sup>Edward M. Hubicz, op. cit., pp. 23-33.

<sup>20</sup>Edward M. Hubicz, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

appearance in the Gimli area of the Evergreen Division in 1897, immediately after New Iceland was thrown open for settlement to all newcomers. The first group arrived by way of Teulon to take homesteads in the Pleasant Home district. Among these first arrivals were: Dominic Cherniak, J. Rech, Joseph Kretowski, Roch Powolski, Michael Cizewski, and John Pemkowski.<sup>21</sup> Each succeeding year brought more to swell their numbers until, in 1909, an observer estimated that there were more than four hundred Polish immigrants from Austria in the surrounding districts. Among the settlements they began are Komarno, Okno, Zbaraz, and Jaroslaw.

The extreme poverty of most of these early arrivals is illustrated in the following anecdote:<sup>22</sup>

Another family--father, mother, and two children arrived at Selkirk in 1904. The Immigration Hall was then on the east bank of the Red River. As this family was destined for Winnipeg Beach, they had to cross the river by ferry. They had only ten cents, and this they paid to be ferried to the west bank of the river. There they took to the railway track and walked to Winnipeg Beach, carrying their bundles and their children. On arriving at the railway station at Winnipeg Beach, they sat down on their bundles and wept. They knew no one--they could not speak English, and could not find a relative of theirs who had already settled in the district.

The first two settlers of Ukrainian origin reached Winnipeg in 1892.<sup>23</sup> Those who ventured north in 1897 to establish a settlement in the Pleasant Home district, were, along with the Polish and German

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<sup>21</sup>Edward M. Hubicz, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>22</sup>Manitoba Pageant, April 1957. p. 9.

<sup>23</sup>Manitoba Pageant, April 1964. pp. 12-13.

pioneers, from the poverty-stricken provinces of southern Austria. At first they were called Ruthenians; as many of them had come from the province of Ruthenia in Austria. After World War I, they took the name Ukrainian. Later arrivals founded new settlements to the north as the more suitable land in the Pleasant Home district became pre-empted. Malonton, Meleb, Melnice, Silver, and Dniester became predominantly Ukrainian centres although smaller groups established themselves throughout the entire area of the present Evergreen School Division.

Typical of the experiences encountered by these hard working pioneers are those related by the early settlers of Dniester. These Ukrainians left Austria in 1900 attracted by the glowing reports of the young Dominion as circulated by the government land agents. When they arrived at their destination, they decided to name their new location Dniester after the river that had flowed through their lands in Europe. The first group of settlers included the following families: S. Bohonos, N. Dell, W. Evanchuck, P. Sochaski, F. Lycar, and H. Hancharyk.<sup>24</sup> A second group consisting of twenty families arrived in 1902 to take up most of the remaining homesteads in the district. A forerunner of these migrations was Mr. S. Demedash, who had come north to Dniester after spending the winter of 1889 at Pleasant Home.

For the first seven years the children did not attend school but remained home to assist with the work on the farm. As there were no roads, each farmer co-operated in blazing a trail across his land to

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<sup>24</sup>Supplied by Mr. Kost Bohonos in an interview January 10, 1965.

form a connected route to Gimli, the nearest trading centre. A government operated store at Gimli provided short term loans for those in need of essentials. Income for the first few years was derived mainly from working as labourers for the more prosperous farmers in southern Manitoba. This required the men folk to be absent for long periods of time during which the women were obliged to carry on the work on the homestead.

One early pioneer related the following:<sup>25</sup>

One summer a child died. The women from the surrounding farms gathered to assist with the burial. After fashioning a crude wooden coffin, they formed a procession carrying the casket upon their shoulders nine miles through wood and swamp to the nearest graveyard. The men folk were away working.

After the arrival of the railway, revenue was derived from the sale of cord-wood from the heavy stands of poplar. More time could now be devoted to the clearing of land and the establishment of small mixed farms.

Other groups of Ukrainians migrated first to the Willow Creek settlement, arriving by boat at Gimli via Selkirk. These settlers established the first Eastern European settlement in what is now the Evergreen School Division. From there they spread northward to occupy most of the land to the Arborg district. Such School District names as: Tarno, Sambor, and Jaroslaw, testify to the origin of these people in the land north of the Carpathian Mountains in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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<sup>25</sup>Supplied by Mr. William Chimchak in an interview at Komarno January 7, 1965.



The forerunner of the predominantly German settlements at Camp Morton, Berlo, Felzendorf, and Kreuzburg was J. Rech who came with the first settlers from Austria to the Pleasant Home district in 1897. Mr. M. Kunz, the father of Mr. Martin Kunz the now retired storekeeper at Camp Morton, arrived in the Felzendorf district around the turn of the century. He led in the establishment of the settlements to the north.

When Mr. M. Kunz began homesteading at Felzendorf, he received much valuable assistance from Mr. K. Heidinger<sup>26</sup> who had arrived three years previously. Mr. K. Heidinger had been a blacksmith and wagon-maker in his native Russia prior to emigrating to New York to seek employment in his trade. After spending a few years in New York, he came northwest to Winnipeg. For several years he worked at his trade in a factory located on Higgins Avenue in Winnipeg. He quit in 1897 to join the trek of homesteaders to the newly-opened Icelandic settlement on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

When Mr. M. Kunz wrote to his friends and relatives in Europe of the many opportunities, the abundance of rich farm lands, and the civil liberties that were to be enjoyed in the new Dominion, many sold their small holdings and few personal possessions and prepared to leave.

The first party was composed of the following pioneers: Mr. Carl Hemmerling, Mr. A. Haas, Mr. Adam Haas, Mr. Mathias Haas, and their wives and children. They went on board ship, bound for Canada, at Hamburg, Germany, in the spring of 1901. Mr. Carl Hemmerling, who

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<sup>26</sup>Supplied by Mr. John Heidinger, Gimli, Manitoba, in an interview November 8, 1964.

is at present farming at Arborg, Manitoba, described the crossing in the following words:

We had to spend two days in Hamburg awaiting the departure of our ship. It was a German liner, and we were well treated while on board. Altogether the fare for the group amounted to \$300., or about \$50. per person. It took fourteen days to make the crossing.

Just before our expected arrival at Winnipeg, we were requested to proceed directly to Selkirk since the Immigration Hall at Winnipeg was filled and could not accommodate us. This information was relayed to us by the German Agent, a Mr. Hedley, I believe, whose left arm had been amputated.

At Selkirk we got on board a sailboat bound for Gimli. There were few passengers and we had to provide our own lunch. We stepped ashore at midnight. The village had about twenty homes and we had no place to go for the night. Someone directed us to the schoolhouse where we spent the rest of the night. The next morning we set out on foot for Mr. M. Kunz's home three miles west at Felzendorf. It was spring and there were many mosquito infested swamps to be crossed.<sup>27</sup>

This group settled on homesteads at Faxe (now Camp Morton). Since there was no Post Office to serve the new community. Mr. Adam Haas, whose farm was located about a mile from the lakeshore, became the first postmaster. As a result, the post office address became known as Haas, Manitoba. Later, Mr. Adam Haas established a General Store on his farm to serve the needs of those who received their mail through his post office.

The main source of revenue for the settlers was derived from the thick stands of timber to be found on all the homesteads. This had to be cleared away to make new land and there was a steady demand in the older settlements to the south for cord wood and lumber products.

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<sup>27</sup>Supplied by Mr. Carl Heidinger, Arborg, Manitoba, in an interview November 10, 1964.

Trade between these places became possible with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway branch line north from Winnipeg to Riverton. In 1906 the construction of this line was halted temporarily and was not resumed again until 1914 when it was finally completed. Another railway line was constructed in 1910 to serve the settlements further from the lakeshore from Winnipeg to Arborg. The presence of these two railway lines greatly accelerated the settlement of the area.

In each settlement, the general store and post office became the centre of a flourishing business in which cordwood was taken in exchange for staple food products and other essentials. The wood was then freighted to the railhead and loaded into box cars for shipment to Winnipeg and points on the prairie as far west as Saskatchewan.

Mr. Carl Hemmerling recalls the work of freighting in the following words:

We had to make a return trip daily by ox team from Faxe to Winnipeg Beach, a distance of seventeen miles one way. To do this, we had to get up at three in the morning and leave at four. We usually returned at ten in the evening. For this we received a dollar a cord.

Life was hard but not without its compensations. The Icelandic settlers, already established, were kind to the new settlers and provided them with much needed assistance and advice to help them overcome the difficulties of adjustment during the initial period. Milk was provided free until the first cow could be purchased. A good cow sold for sixty dollars. Eggs could be obtained for ten cents a dozen. A good cook stove cost five dollars. Weddings and religious festivals provided the chief reason to seek a diversion from the steady routine

of hard labour and engage in merrymaking. Weddings were celebrated with dancing and dining often extending over a period of three days without interruption.

Inspired by the news received from the first group at Haas, more settlers came to share in the experiences of frontier life. In 1902, Mr. J. Marks and Mr. Martin Keller arrived with their families to settle on homesteads west of Haas, and about two miles from the lakeshore. A third group arrived in 1903 to begin the new settlement of Berlo. In the vanguard of this group were Mr. Mathias Gottfried, Mr. Michael Gottfried, Mr. Adam Reichert, Mr. J. Franz, and Mr. C. Eirs. In Berlo, they found a country setting somewhat reminiscent of the locality they had left behind in Europe. The first postmaster at Berlo was Mr. J. Franz.

#### IV. THE MENNONITE SETTLEMENTS

In the Fall of 1949, a group of Mennonite farmers from the Steinbach and Morris districts of Manitoba joined in a venture to establish a new colony in the Washow Bay area.<sup>28</sup> The enterprise became known as The Washow Bay Land Settlement Project. In September, 1949, a party of interested men was chosen to view the land. They returned filled with enthusiasm at the prospects offered by the area. Dr. S. O. Thompson, M.L.A. for the constituency, assisted in the venture.

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<sup>28</sup>Supplied by Mr. E. Groening, Principal of Mennville School, in an interview January 15, 1965.

Twenty quarter sections were purchased during the winter of 1949-50 and in the spring, work began at making them suitable to receive the first settlers. The new land was priced at \$1,000 for the poorer quarter-sections, to as much as \$4,500 for the best which were sold on tender. A crawler tractor was purchased by the group to begin bulldozing and breaking the land. This work began in the summer of 1950. The first location developed was the south-east quarter of Section 33, Township 29, Range 3 East. The work continued throughout the summer of 1951 when several families stayed part-time to help clear and break the land.

The influx of permanent settlers took place in the Spring of 1952 when five families moved onto the prepared sites. Four of these families are still there. They are: K. B. Reimer, Jacob Kroecker, Aaron Friesen, and George Loewen. More families arrived during the summer and fall so that by the end of 1952 there were thirteen families in all.

More settlers arrived each succeeding year as the land was prepared for occupancy. Today the colony consists of about fifty families. Some are arriving from colonies in Mexico.

The building of the homes and clearing of land had progressed swiftly under the auspices of the Society until 1952 when it was dissolved and the tractor and equipment were sold to the individual farmers. Thereafter, the farmers began managing their individual affairs.

Drainage and road building presented a problem since the first years of settlement were exceptionally wet ones. The roads through the muskeg had very little clay in them, so much of the travelling was by tractor. A bush trail across the ridges to the Howardville road was often used until the regular roads were improved and gravelled. It was the good fortune of the settlement that the gravel on Section 35 was available for the Riverton to Pine Dock road, and as a result the roads were filled in with gravel and greatly improved.

The Washow Bay General Store and Post Office were established in 1963. The proprietor and postmaster is John Barkman. In 1953, hydro-electric power was made available throughout the district; and in March of 1956 telephone service was installed.

Today there are few farms still available in this prosperous and progressive settlement. Mixed farming is the main occupation, although a beginning has been made into small business ventures such as a portable feed mill company and a few building and contracting enterprises.

#### V. OTHER SETTLEMENTS

Approximately four miles to the south of Riverton is a small Hungarian settlement. It was begun during the 1929-39 Depression. The families migrated into the district in search of employment and remained to become bushworkers,<sup>29</sup> cutting logs for the local lumber mills and cord-wood which was still in demand for fuel and pulp and paper making.

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<sup>29</sup>Supplied by Mr. Philip Orzech, at Finns, Manitoba, in an interview February 12, 1965.

There are now about fifteen families settled on the relatively good agricultural land in the district.

## CHAPTER III

### EDUCATION IN NEW ICELAND 1875-1889

The earliest efforts at educating the young in the settlement of New Iceland were conducted under the guidance of their religious leaders. This was in conformity with the long accepted practice followed for generations in Iceland. There, the Lutheran State Church had required that every child be confirmed, usually at the age of fourteen. This necessitated the learning of the catechism which required a knowledge of reading. The education of the child was made as much as possible the responsibility of the parents, who in conjunction with the church, provided a basic education in reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. It was the minister's responsibility frequently to conduct tests to determine the extent of the child's knowledge and to admit for confirmation those who were successful. There was keen competition to excel in learning the catechism, for only those who had been confirmed were regarded as fitting members of the community. Because of the stigma of failure to qualify, the pressure on the children to seek approval prompted them to put forth their best efforts. Their rewards exceeded their fondest expectations, for, the acquisition of the reading skills, required of all citizens, became the magic key with which to open the door to all other fields of learning.

#### I. THE ENGLISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Only nine days after their arrival at the colony, the settlers indicated a desire to unite with the educational system in Manitoba.



A letter was sent by John Taylor to the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

It contained, in part, the following:<sup>1</sup>

The Icelanders in the colony are desirous of having a school for their children as soon as they can put up a schoolhouse. They have a teacher with them and wish to be connected with the regular educational system of Canada.

Not knowing the proper person to write to in Winnipeg on this subject, and aware of the kind of interest you have manifested in the affairs of our young colony, I take the liberty of asking you to mention the subject to the gentleman holding the office of Superintendent and to inform me by return of the bearer.

The location of the settlement north of the provincial boundary placed it outside the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Legislature and excluded any participation in the benefits and provisions of the Manitoba School Act.

Spurred on by their desire to learn the language of the country of their adoption and anxious to fit into the Canadian cultural mosaic, the Icelanders opened their first school shortly before Christmas in 1875. The following excerpt is taken from an account of the first settlement after the landing of the pioneers on October 21, 1875:<sup>2</sup>

That winter an English elementary school was established in Gimli. The teacher was Caroline (Carrie) Taylor, 'an intelligent and distinguished woman', daughter of William, the brother of John Taylor. She married Sigurdur Kristofersson the next winter, on the first Monday in Thorri (month including part of January and part of February). The bridal couple stood in cold, bright weather north of the smallpox quarantine line, which was located fifteen miles south of the colony, at Netley Creek; but a half-breed minister, who performed the ceremony, stood south of the quarantine markers.

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba Papers: (MSS in Public Archives of Manitoba), number 1147.

<sup>2</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi, vol. III Winnipeg: Columbia Press, 1943. p. 17.

John Taylor, no doubt, had much to do with getting these first classes organized. Thirty pupils were enrolled the first year.

In September of the following year, the young colony was visited by a smallpox epidemic of such disastrous proportions that within six months, it had taken one hundred and two lives. All the inhabitants of the colony were placed under a quarantine on November 27, 1876. The only hospital available was the reconverted government warehouse forty feet long and sixteen feet wide. Later, when permission was granted by the doctor to resume classes, Jane (whose name is also recorded as Janet or Jenny) Taylor, Caroline's sister, became the teacher. Sixty-three pupils gathered in the warehouse to receive instruction chiefly in reading and writing English.<sup>3</sup>

There is no mention in historical accounts of any other public instruction offered during the first two years. The second winter no handwritten paper was published as had been done the first winter. Plans, however, were being made to establish a printed paper.

## II. CHURCH-SUPERVISED SCHOOLS

In the Autumn of 1877, two events of major significance to the life of the colony occurred,--the settlement was honoured by a visit by Lord Dufferin, the Governor General of Canada; and, two ministers, the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson, and the Reverend Jon Bjarnason, came to minister to the spiritual and educational needs of the struggling colony.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid. pp. 115-122.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. pp. 39-41.



Lord Dufferin conducted a tour of inspection of most of the homes in the settlement and on the adjacent farms. Before his departure, he delivered an address in which he made the following remarks:<sup>5</sup>

. . . for you possess in a far greater degree than is probably imagined, that which is the essence and foundation of all superiority-- intelligence, education, and intellectual activity. In fact I have not entered a single hut or cottage in the settlement, which did not contain, no matter how bare its walls, or scanty its furniture, a library of twenty or thirty volumes; and I am informed that there is scarcely a child amongst you who cannot read or write.

The arrival of the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson on October 19, 1877, caused a wave of religious dissension that eventually split the community into two groups. Reverend Pall Thorlaksson (uncle of Dr. P. H. T. Thorlaksson of the Winnipeg Clinic) was a devout and zealous young minister, who had founded the first Icelandic congregation in America at Shawano, Wisconsin. He came to New Iceland on behalf of the Norwegian Synod in the United States. However, many of the settlers preferred to issue a call to the Reverend Jon Bjarnason, also an enthusiastic and talented young minister; for they considered him to be more fully representative of the teachings of the Icelandic Lutheran Church, those of the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson being more fundamentalist and in harmony with the Norwegian Synod.

A meeting was held and a call was issued to Reverend Jon Bjarnason, of the First Icelandic Lutheran Church. He arrived at his mission on November 8, 1877. Three congregations were served by Reverend Pall Thorlaksson and five by Reverend Jon Bjarnason. The

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<sup>5</sup>Roy H. Ruth, Educational Echoes. Winnipeg: Columbia Printers Ltd., 1964. p. 20.

members of the respective dissentient groups were referred to as "Pall's Menn", and "Jon's Menn".

The contributions made by the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson toward the establishment of elementary and Sunday schools are revealed in these excerpts:<sup>6</sup>

It is probably nowhere mentioned that the Rev. Pall Thorlaksson founded elementary or Sunday schools in his parishes in New Iceland, and Framfari says little about this matter. Yet it may be considered fully established that children were given instruction in these congregations, but it cannot be positively stated what form it took. . . . In the regulations of the Rev. Pall for his congregations, teachers are twice mentioned.

In the twelfth article these statements are found: ". . . A valid reason for dismissing a minister or a teacher is stubborn clinging to false tenets, a scandalous life, or wilful neglect of the duties of office."

And in the nineteenth article: "A majority of the votes of all members of the congregation who have voting rights is required so that:

1. A minister or teacher be chosen, after the congregation has agreed on whom it would be most advisable to elect to these offices. . . ."

There are numerous indications that the elected teachers in each congregation were not placed in charge of a school but, rather, that they travelled among the people and conducted lessons in the homes. It is probable that the children congregated in the teacher's home, or in the home of one of the students, as the people were accustomed to do when attending the church services of the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson, who must himself have been the principal teacher in the preparation of the children for confirmation each Spring.

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<sup>6</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., pp. 115-116.

While there is no direct reference to a school being conducted by the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson in New Iceland, it may be pointed out that immediately after he moved to Dakota in 1879, he had a school established there. Dr. Jon Jonsson from Skagafjordur, Iceland, writes on this matter in a letter dated January 7, 1880, to a friend in Markland, Nova Scotia, "Three schools have been established this winter. . ., and it is progressing well." Since the Reverend Pall Thorlaksson lost no time attending to the educational welfare of his congregation in Dakota, it must be assumed that he must have done so in New Iceland, where his active opponents were at work. Besides, the publication, Framfari, would not have remained silent on the matter had the children in his congregation not received adequate instruction and education.

Because of the imperfect evidence it cannot be categorically stated that schools were established in the congregation of Reverend Pall Thorlaksson in New Iceland before the arrival of Reverend Jon Bjarnason in November, 1877. Consequently the schools of Reverend Jon Bjarnason and his wife, must be considered the first Icelandic schools of this type in the colony.

On his first exploratory trip throughout the settlement, Reverend Jon Bjarnason established Sunday schools. The following is an account of his activities taken from Framfari that year:<sup>7</sup>

Immediately on his arrival, he began to work at the spiritual edification of his congregation. He held his services in the south

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<sup>7</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., p. 119.

part of the colony, but then he went on foot (the lake was then so frozen over in the bays that one could not travel on it by boat, but the road had no snow cover, so that one could not drive a sleigh) north to the Icelandic River, and arrived there on the sixteenth of the last month (November). His wife, Fru Lara, accompanied him. The Rev. Jon held a service there at Lundi on the eighteenth, and examined children on the catechism. On Monday, he examined the children who were preparing for confirmation. On Wednesday there was a general meeting of the congregations, and the Rev. Jon attended it. Then he made a suggestion to establish Sunday schools for children and young people, and this proposal was well received. Men were immediately secured to undertake teaching in four localities in the north part of the community, so that the schools commenced immediately on the following Sunday. In these schools children unable to read were taught reading; those who read poorly are taught to read correctly; children and young people are questioned on their catechism and it is explained to them; they are led to read Bible passages and Scripture. Though the main objective of these schools is to enable the children to read well, and to make it easier for the minister to impart Christian teachings, the teachers also instruct the older children in writing and arithmetic.

Reverend Jon Bjarnason did not reach Mikley (Big Island, or Hecla Island) until November 23. There, divine service was held with about fifty people in attendance. The children were examined on the catechism, and a meeting was held to review congregational matters, which included the founding of a Sunday school, said to have been established before Christmas, 1877.

On his return journey, Reverend Jon Bjarnason visited Breidavik (now Hnausa). There he examined the children on the catechism, following the examination, there was a discussion about establishing two Sunday schools in the Icelandic River community. This matter was well received and suitable men were immediately found to undertake the teaching. They began giving instruction the following Sunday.

There were more than one instructor in each school, and all the teaching was free of charge. Framfari recommended that the adults

should attend these schools for their greater edification and knowledge of the Scripture.

After Reverend Jon Bjarnason's return from the north to Vidines (Willow Point), he called a meeting of his congregation and advanced the proposal that 'weekday schools' be established. The suggestion received enthusiastic support. The school was established and the first classes were held before Christmas. It continued to operate until April 22. A description of this school translated from early Icelandic records, reads as follows:<sup>8</sup>

The principal teacher of the school was Fru Lara Bjarnason, although others assisted with the teaching. The school was conducted five days a week in the warehouse in Gimli, which had been equipped for service on Sunday but the winter before had been the only hospital in the colony when the smallpox raged. As many were admitted to the school as accommodation allowed, regardless of whether the children belonged to members of the Rev. Jon's congregation or not. Instruction was given in reading to perfection, i.e. to perfect reading skills, writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography, English, and music. Besides there was religious instruction, and Rev. Jon explained various points of faith when he had time to do so. Illiterate children were not admitted. All the teaching was free of charge. There were forty-two pupils.

The next year, Fru Lara conducted the school with the assistance of her husband and Fridjon Fridriksson. It was closed on Maundy Thursday before church service, and at the same time the teacher examined the children in Reading, Geography, Singing, and to some extent in English.

During the winter of 1878-79, Kristjan Jonsson conducted the elementary school at Lundi in Vidines, the Willow Point community. The instruction was given on Sundays and Wednesdays. The same winter a school was conducted at Lundi on the Icelandic River (near Riverton).

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<sup>8</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., p. 120.

Twenty-seven children were in attendance. The teachers were: Sigtryggur Jonasson; his wife, Rannveig Olafsdottir Briem; Torfhildur Thorsteinsdottir Holm and Halldor Briem. Some of the girls were given lessons in embroidery.

There are many indications that the elementary school continued in operation during the winter of 1879-80, and probably longer. Framfari (II, er), October 14, 1879, mentioned as a news item from Gimli that a school similar to the one conducted the previous winter at Lundi by the Icelandic River was expected to reopen, and that the building, the old community hall, was being prepared for this purpose. But elementary schools of this type can scarcely have existed in the colony for many years after the majority left it, and the ministers had departed. The population became so sparse in 1878 that any attempt at establishing a separate school system would not have warranted the cost.

The year 1878 was a difficult period in the life of the colony. Split by religious dissensions, the scars of the smallpox epidemic still fresh on their memory, and unable to secure further government assistance, many became discouraged and began moving out of the colony in search of better locations. The Reverend Pall Thorlaksson, who never did like the location of New Iceland, left for the United States early in 1878, accompanied by many of his followers. When the Lady Ellen, a steamboat, docked at Gimli on April 27, it took on board many of the settlers, some bound for a new location in Minnesota, and others to look for employment in Winnipeg. At one time that year, the



people left in the colony numbered only fifty. Those who remained suffered further reversals when the lake flooded. The Reverend Jon Bjarnason left for Iceland not to return until 1886. Many of the settlers left to look for suitable land in Argyle, one hundred miles west of Winnipeg. These periods of migration are often referred to as the Great Exodus. Education during those years was virtually at a standstill. In general, the people must have helped one another in their homes in giving children religious instruction, and in teaching them reading, writing, and arithmetic, as far as their circumstances permitted, and their own interests and knowledge allowed.

The first man to establish an English and Icelandic school for young people in Gimli after the Exodus, was Gudni Thorsteinsson, who later became the postmaster. He also conducted one at the same time at the Vidines community farther south (Willow Point). The school at Gimli was conducted in the home of Petur Palsson, while that at Vidines was in the home of Kristjan Jonsson Kernested, in the district now known as Kjarna. Each school was maintained for a period of three months. This project was commenced in the autumn of 1885. About twenty young people and children attended each school. The fee was fifty cents a month for each pupil. The housing accommodation was provided free of charge. These schools were maintained throughout the next winter under the same arrangement.

The result of this educational effort was considerable, stated Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, an early historian.

The young people that received it have been placed at a far greater advantage (have much better use of their faculties) in society than those who missed it and did not have the use of the public schools either when they were established.

Nevertheless it became clearly evident through this endeavour that private teaching could not satisfy the need for education except in a very limited way. The poorest could not pay, and the collection of fees was very difficult, for there was no legal enforcement of it.

In a historical sense, the older and newer communities of New Iceland became practically silent regions after Framfari, the first printed Icelandic newspaper closed its offices in January 30, 1880. At this stage, the constitution of New Iceland fell into complete abeyance because of the small size of the population and its consequent impotence. It was, therefore, obvious that a Canadian form of municipal organization was essential to provide a much needed form of government for the colony. To this end, Gudni Thorsteinsson provided leadership for reform. Outside of the community, he was assisted by the extremely capable pioneer and statesman Sigtryggur Joasson.

The Canadian form of government was eventually established in the colony in March, 1887. New Iceland was not divided into school districts until the following year, and even then no teaching was provided by law. It was not until after the New Year in 1889 that Solvi Thorlaksson, an agriculturist, taught elementary school in Gimli for three months. He had twelve pupils. The following autumn, the schools of New Iceland came under the jurisdiction of the provincial government.

### III. AMALGAMATION WITH THE PROVINCE

When it became apparent that the position of maintaining, in theory, a form of republic within the boundaries of a Province of the Dominion was impractical as well as untenable not only with respect to the weak position of the colony to provide essential services, but also as a legal entity, the right of the Federal Government to make land grants and to delegate authority in educational matters and in other spheres of government granted exclusively to the provinces at Confederation, their whole relationship with the Federal Government was closely re-examined. While the question of deciding the language of instruction in schools created no problem in the schools of New Iceland, since the language used had always been English, yet matters such as this were of concern to the provincial government and became the source of disputes in other Manitoba settlements. Many other influences of a more complex nature militated against the continuance of the settlement under its original charter. As a result, the colony was brought completely under the provincial and municipal regulations. The schools passed under the control of the Manitoba Schools Act.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MANITOBA TO 1957

A knowledge of the growth and development of education in the province as a whole is essential to an understanding of the policies pursued and the progress achieved in education at the local level. The dependence of local school boards upon the provincial government for financial assistance and legislative control made it necessary for them to adhere to government policy in the field of education and to co-operate in the formation of a provincial education system.

Frequently the will of the majority conflicts with the basic civil liberties of minority groups as guaranteed by our Federal and Provincial constitutions. When this occurs over religious differences the laws are not adhered to since they do not have the support of the mores of the aggrieved party in the conflict. The Manitoba School Question and the issues involved is a case in point. The Government of Manitoba, in 1895, refused to obey the order of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, and to this day the grievances as set out by the Privy Council have not been redressed.

Ultimately, it is the hope that the type of educational system evolved will be a representation of the consensus of the members of the community.

#### I. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND 1820-1870

The parish school system became the method of educating the young

in the Red River colony from 1820 to 1870. It produced excellent results, and it is difficult to conceive of any other system that would have adapted itself so readily to the existing conditions. The courage, patience, and zeal which characterized the missionary effort, could not have been equalled by any civil substitute.

Two separate groups were established--the English-Protestant, and the French-Canadian-Catholic. The former was further subdivided into the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist, each with its own separate school. A few independent schools were also in existence. Each guided in its own way the education of its adherents. The followers of each group were indoctrinated with widely differing views on religious beliefs, cultural background, language, moral code, community customs, and habits of industry. As a result, one part of the community was always in conflict with the other yet both groups were professed Christians.

Both groups received grants-in-aid from the Governor and Council of the Hudson's Bay Company. This aid was never placed on a permanent basis and could be withdrawn at any time. The various church organizations had control of the content and extent of the subject matter taught, and received aid in proportion to the extent it was deemed that this education was of benefit to the colony as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE MANITOBA ACT AND LEGISLATION OF 1871

It was but natural that the Manitoba Act and early legislative

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<sup>1</sup>C. E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada. Toronto: W. J. Gage and Company, 1957. pp. 151-155.

enactments pertaining to education should continue to perpetuate the existing traditions and societal structure. To this end, the Manitoba Act was planned to meet the needs of a population which was dual in both language and religion, Clause 22, of the Manitoba Act, 1870, had three significant sections: (1) guarantee of minority rights, (2) right of appeal to the Governor-General in Council, (3) remedial legislation by the Parliament of Canada.

Clause 22 of the Manitoba Act reads as follows:<sup>2</sup>

In and for the province the said legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education, subject and according to the following provisions:

- (1) Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law or practice in the province at the union.
- (2) An appeal shall lie to the Governor-General in Council from any act or decision of the legislature of the province, or of any provincial authority, affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education.
- (3) In case any such provincial law from time to time seems to the Governor-General in Council requisite for the due execution of the provisions of this section is not made or in case any decision of the Governor-General in Council on any appeal under this section is not duly executed by the proper provincial authority in that behalf, then and in every such case, and as far only as the circumstances of each case may require, the Parliament of Canada may make remedial laws for the due execution of the provisions of this section, and of any decision of the Governor-General in Council under this section.

The first legislature of Manitoba, in its initial session, established the educational structure on the interpretation placed at

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<sup>2</sup>Brief, (Presented to the Manitoba Legislature by the Manitoba Association for Equality in Education, November 10, 1964). pp. 2-3.

the time on Clause 22 of the Manitoba Act. This necessitated the formation of a Board of Education consisting of two sections: (1) Protestant, and (2) Roman Catholic. The first Board included eight ecclesiastics and four laymen.

Chapter XII of "An Act to Establish a System of Education in this Province", 1871, reads as follows:

(1) The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may appoint not less than ten and not more than fourteen persons to be a Board of Education for the Province of Manitoba, of whom one-half shall be Protestants and the other half Catholics.

(2) The Lieutenant-Governor may appoint one of the Protestant members of the Board to be Superintendent of Protestant Schools, and one of the Catholic members to be Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and the two Superintendents shall be joint Secretaries of the Board.

(3) It shall be the duty of the Board:

(1) To make, from time to time, such regulations as they may think fit for the general organization of the Common Schools.

(2) To select books, maps, and globes to be used in the Common Schools, due regard being had in such selection to the choice of English books for the English schools, and French for the French schools; but authority hereby given is not to extend to the selection of books having reference to religion or morals, the selection of such books being regulated by a subsequent clause of this Act.

(3) To alter and subdivide, with the sanction of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, any such school district established by this Act.

(10) Each section shall have under its control and management the discipline of the schools of the section.

(11) It shall make rules and regulations for the examination, grading, and licensing of teachers, and for the withdrawal of licenses on sufficient cause.

(12) It shall prescribe such books to be used in the section as have reference to religion and morals.

(13) From the sum appropriated by the Legislature for Common School Education there shall first be paid the incidental expenses of the Board and of the Sections, and such sum for the services of the Superintendents of Education not exceeding \$100. each, as the Lieutenant-Governor in Council shall deem just, and the residue then remaining shall be appropriated to the support and maintenance of Common Schools, the other moiety to the support of the Catholic Schools.

The Board of Education was granted extensive powers in the matter of general regulations governing the organization of schools, the selection and authorization of text books and equipment, and the recommendation of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council for any alteration and subdivision of the school districts established by the Act of 1871.

Each section of the Board made regulations governing the examinations, grading, and licensing of teachers. It could withdraw a teacher's license for sufficient cause. Each section selected the books to be used for moral and religious instruction.

Twenty-four electoral districts were established--twelve Protestant, and twelve Roman Catholic. The colonists had located in fairly homogeneous groups so that all of those belonging to one faith were usually included in the same district. To overcome any difficulties that might arise from being included in an electoral district other than one's cultural allegiance, provision was made whereby the children might use the school of the neighbouring district. This frequently resulted in awkward situations even in 1871, and as the population increased in both numbers and mobility, became almost untenable.

The practice of electing a Board of Trustees at a duly qualified



public meeting, to take charge of the affairs of the school district, had been adopted in 1847 by the Scottish Presbyterians for the operation of their parish schools. It was found to be a most satisfactory arrangement for it provided a measure of local control in educational matters.

### III. CHANGE-PROMOTING FACTORS

Prior to 1870 there existed an effective educational system. It was a dual system in which both Protestant and Catholic minorities were protected. The subsequent school legislation of 1890 represented a complete departure from what had at first existed in Manitoba 'by law', and in the Red River settlement 'by practice'. Some of the change-promoting factors were:<sup>3</sup>

(1) The friction that existed between the Catholic and Protestant elements as revealed by the events of the Riel Uprising. Riel was finally hanged in 1885.

(2) Numerical equality between Protestants and Catholics no longer existed and the whole question of equality came under review. In 1870, there were 6,000 Catholics, 5,000 Anglicans, and about 1,000 Scottish Presbyterians. By 1890, there were 14,000 Catholics and 108,000 Protestants.

(3) The Catholic clergy had fostered the development of homogeneous settlements. In 1887, the Municipal Act was passed, making Manitoba a province of Municipalities rather than parishes, and the

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<sup>3</sup>Brief, (Presented to the Manitoba Legislature by the Manitoba Association for Equality in Education, November 10, 1964) passim.

ethnic boundaries were set aside for rectangular geographic boundaries.

(4) In 1889, Dalton McCarthy began his attack on the Jesuit Estates Bill and his crusade spread to Manitoba.

The events immediately preceding the adoption of the Manitoba Public Schools Act of 1890 are summarized as follows in the Brief presented by the Manitoba Association for Equality in Education to the Manitoba Legislature on November 10, 1964.

The decision to do away with denominational schools was announced by the Honourable James Smart on August 1, 1889 in a speech at Souris. Then on August 5th at Portage la Prairie, Dalton McCarthy made a vehement anti-Catholic speech and the Honourable Joseph Martin, who was on the platform, pledged himself and, indirectly, the government to the abolition of both denominational schools and the use of the French language in Manitoba.

#### IV. THE PUBLIC SCHOOL ACT OF 1890

The Public School Act provided that the public schools should be non-sectarian and free, and that religious exercises should be conducted according to regulations drawn up by an Advisory Board. In addition, the Board was empowered to regulate the courses of study, textbooks, examinations, and the qualifications and certification of teachers. It also created a Provincial Department of Education as a sub-department under a Minister of the Crown.

In fact, the Act abolished Catholic school support and established a Protestant public school system with a course of study and a religious atmosphere acceptable to the lowest common denominator of Protestantism. All Catholic school districts were dissolved. Those Catholics who

desired to maintain separate schools, were required, in addition, to support the Public School System.

Both Anglicans and Catholics objected to the school legislation of 1890 and sought legal decisions to restore to them their loss of civil liberties.<sup>4</sup> Other Protestant groups favoured the public school system which served them equally in the capacity of a separate school.

Professor W. L. Morton had this comment to make:<sup>5</sup>

By the School Act of 1890, the School Question was concluded to the satisfaction of the British and Protestant majority in Manitoba. The Ontario Immigrants had made the old dual community over in the image of their old natal province, and by refusing even separate schools on the Ontario model, had made the copy what they would have had the original be. Manitoba was to be a melting pot, a crucible of Canadian nationalism.

#### V. THE MANITOBA SCHOOL QUESTION

Although modern legislators recognize that the right to establish and the legal means of support are indivisible, the Education Act of 1890 made no legal provision for the support of Separate schools. It did not condemn or deny the establishment of these schools. It simply withdrew all financial support previously received from public funds, and compelled all ratepayers to support the Public School System. The legality of this action was tested in the courts.

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<sup>4</sup>John S. Ewart, The Manitoba School Question. Winnipeg: The Copp Clarke Co. Ltd., 1894.

<sup>5</sup>W. L. Morton, Manitoba--A History. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957. p. 250.

In the case of Logan versus the City of Winnipeg, Mr. Logan, an Anglican, refused to pay his school tax to the City of Winnipeg claiming that the City had no legal right to impose one on him. He was vindicated in his stand by the Supreme Court of Canada. They ruled in his favour by emphasizing that his right had existed "in practice" prior to 1870 and "by law" from 1870 to 1890. A similar judgment was awarded in the case of Barrett versus the City of Winnipeg. When the City of Winnipeg pursued the matter and had the judgment referred to the Privy Council, the highest court in the land at that time, the decision was reversed. The Privy Council arrived at its conclusion through placing the emphasis on the right "to have" and this right had not been denied.<sup>6</sup>

In 1894, the case of Brophy et al. reintroduced the question under an appeal to the Privy Council that the rights of minorities had been "prejudicially affected" by the school legislation of 1890. This time the Privy Council supported the contention and held that the legislation was, in fact, *intra vires* of the provincial legislature. Pursuant to subsections (2) and (3) of the Manitoba Act, an appeal was made to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council referred the question of interpretation to the Supreme Court and it proceeded subsequently to the Privy Council who rendered their decision on the 29th of January 1895. The Committee hearing the appeal ordered these three recourses:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>John S. Ewart, op. cit.,

<sup>7</sup>Brief, (Presented to the Manitoba Legislature by the Manitoba Association for Equality in Education, November 10, 1964). p. 4.

- (1) Restore the right to build, maintain, equip, manage, conduct and support Roman Catholic schools in the manner provided for by the said statutes which were repealed by the two Acts of 1890.
- (2) Restore the right to share proportionately in any grant made out of the public funds for the purposes of education.
- (3) Restore the right of exemption of such Roman Catholics as contribute to Roman Catholic schools from all payment or contribution to the support of any other schools.

The Government of Manitoba refused to obey the order.

The matter now became the responsibility of the Federal Government to introduce remedial legislation to protect the rights of minorities. Accordingly, in 1897, the Federal Government reached a Compromise with the Government of Manitoba. This Compromise, introduced regulations with respect to religious instruction in the Public School; the right to hire Protestant or Catholic teachers according to the majority wishes; the use of French as the language of instruction in addition to English, or any other language and English. The concessions made in the Compromise remained with minor changes, for over seventy years the only recognition of the rights of minorities in the field of education in Manitoba. This constitutes the Manitoba School Question.

## VI. MAJOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGES 1897-1957

The following is an outline of the major legislative changes in the field of education in Manitoba to 1957.

- 1908 - The office of Deputy Minister was created. This Minister of the Crown was assigned full-time work in the Department, and is now one of the most important Cabinet positions.
- 1916 - The repeal of the bi-lingual clause under Dr. R. S. Thornton. This clause, introduced in 1896, read in part: "When ten

pupils in any school speak the French language, or any language other than English, as their native language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French, or such other language and English, upon the bi-lingual system."<sup>8</sup>

1916 - Attendance ages six to fourteen made compulsory.

1918 - The office of Registrar was created.

1937 - The office of Superintendent was created.

1945 - The office of Deputy Minister was restored.

The Special Select Committee of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on Education published the following in its report in 1945. It was a forecast of the changes that occurred as a result of recommendations made by the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education established in 1957.<sup>9</sup>

The Committee, having considered the arguments, accepts the general principle of the larger unit of school administration. It considers that such units could provide a greater degree of equality of educational opportunity, particularly at the secondary level. It further considers that the administrative areas should be sufficiently large to provide a complete educational programme at the elementary and secondary levels, including provision for differentiation of educational opportunity.

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from the Laurier-Sifton agreement in 1896.

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education, 1959. R. S. Evans, Queen's Printer for Manitoba. p. 21.

## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

When the Education Act of 1890 was passed, there were in existence, in New Iceland, the Protestant School Districts of Gimli No. 585, Arnes No. 586, Riverton No. 587, Hnauasa No. 588, and Big Island No. 589. These school district had been established on June 6, 1889,<sup>1</sup> while Manitoba's dual system of education was still in effect. After the change, these school districts continued to operate in much the same manner since the majority of the Icelandic settlers were in favour of the principle.<sup>2</sup>

As the settlement at Lundi (Riverton) grew, new communities were formed farther west from the lakeshore. Geysir was the first of such settlements. The settlers then spread out from Geysir to form the communities of Ardal, Bjarmi, Laufas, Framnes, Vestri, and Island. The village of Arborg in the Ardal School District became the centre of a prosperous agricultural community.

The settlements along the western perimeter of New Iceland were established as the immigrants from Eastern Europe moved northward from the Pleasant Home district into Foley and Willow Creek. As the better

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<sup>1</sup>School Districts Formation Records, Volume 1, Department of Education.

<sup>2</sup>Roy H. Ruth, Educational Echoes, Winnipeg: Columbia Printers Ltd., 1964. pp. 50-51.

homesteads were pre-empted, the newcomers moved on to begin the settlements of Komarno, Malonton, Felzendorf, Haas (Camp Morton), Kreuzberg (Rembrandt), Meleb, and Silver.

Finally, the Mennonites arrived to form a colony and develop the land north of Riverton. Two new school districts, Mennville, and Grund, have been established in that area since 1950.

#### I. PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE EVERGREEN DIVISION

In this historical survey, the school districts, with the exception of those noted below, will be listed in the order of formation.

1. The Evergreen School Division has three secondary school centres: (1) Gimli, (2) Arborg, and (3) Riverton. The secondary schools were built in 1961 as a result of recommendations made by the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education to the Manitoba Legislature. These schools, operated by the Evergreen School Division, will, therefore, be dealt with in a concluding chapter.
2. Some of the schools in the Division, because of their unique character, will be treated in a succeeding chapter under the heading of Special Schools.

The elementary schools that have been closed since the formation of the Evergreen School Division in March, 1959 will be included in the survey. The possibility of these schools ever coming into operation again is now more remote than ever (see Chapter IX), since there appears to be a trend toward consolidation of the elementary schools with the financial responsibility being assumed by the Division Board.



There are at present fifty-nine school districts in the Evergreen School Division.

Gimli S. D. 585. The following is an account of the introduction of the Public School system in Gimli, as recorded by Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson:<sup>3</sup>

. . . the Canadian public school finally commenced in a rather large log structure (where the funeral home of Arinbjorn Sigurgiersson Bardal of Winnipeg now stands). The Lutheran congregation of Gimli owned this building and conducted its services, Sunday School and other meetings there, but sold it to the school district for a hundred and fifty dollars, with the stipulation that it might use it over week-ends the following year. To form the new School Board of the Gimli School District (Vidines or Willow Point community), the following men were elected: Gisli M. Tomasson (Thompson). . . a farmer at the Kross farmstead north of Gimli; Johann Arnason from Espiholl farmstead, and Petur Palsson from the Jadar farmstead, who had then moved to Gimli.

The first teacher was Sigurdur G. Thorarensen from Eyrarbakki, then newly arrived from Iceland, a man of about forty, . . . He had been four years in the Latin school of Reykjavik, and thirteen years a teacher at Eyrarbakki and Skipaskagi in Borgarfjardarsysla, but he had practised homeopathy in the old country. He was an exceptionally good singer (a tenor), a cheerful man and a gentleman, in the opinion of Dean Jens Palsson of Gardar. . . . Sigurdur taught the earlier part of that winter at Gimli, but farther south in the district, the latter part. There were about twenty pupils.

The first public school building in Gimli was enlarged, and remained in use until the year 1900. Then a two-room frame building was constructed to house both the elementary grades and the first high school section. This structure has served the community well; first, as a school, later, as the Gimli Town Hall until 1965, and at present as the office of the local Gimli Health Unit.

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<sup>3</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi. Vol. III. Winnipeg: Columbia Press, 1945. p. 124.

The graduates from the high school section were entitled to enter Normal School, and many did so. In order to qualify for the high school grants, an enrolment of at least fifteen was required. Gimli was always able to maintain the enrolment above this minimum, and, as a result, it was always able to secure the provincial grant and acquire an excellent record for scholarship.

Hjortur J. Leo, who later became a Lutheran minister, was the first principal of this school. In 1902, he was instrumental in forming the Educational Association of Lake Winnipeg. The executive comprised the following officers.<sup>4</sup>

Honorary President . . . . .	S. Sigurdson
President . . . . .	Hjortur Leo
First Vice-President . . . . .	Bjorn Sigvaldson
Second Vice-President . . . . .	Johann Magnusson
Secretary-Treasurer . . . . .	Miss Jona Vopni
Honorary Advisor . . . . .	Inspector E. E. Best

At one of the meetings of the Educational Association of Lake Winnipeg, the Superintendent of Provincial Schools, Mr. A. McIntyre, and Inspector Best expressed great satisfaction with the teaching results and looked forward with keen anticipation to the future contributions of some of the students. Many at that time were distinguishing themselves at the University of Manitoba. The Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Jona Vopni, had taught for a number of years at both schools. Her salary in 1900 was \$350. a year. She is now Mrs. Sigurdson of Winnipeg, the mother of a family of musicians. Hjortur Leo left Gimli in 1903 and was succeeded by Mr. John Erickson. One of

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<sup>4</sup>Logberg, November 13, 1902. pp. 4-5.

his teachers Mr. A. E. Kristjanson, began the first Gimli band. He eventually became a Unitarian minister. A list of school property found in a 1906 register reveals the fact that the total school assets amounted to \$1,395.00. The total assessed property in Gimli was \$44,253.00.

In 1911, Mr. John Erickson was succeeded as principal by the Reverend Runolfur Marteinsson, a Lutheran minister. During that year the school enrolment increased, necessitating the erection of a one-room building south of the main school. Again, in 1912, the school required an additional classroom and temporary quarters were found in the Good Templars Hall at the corner of Third Avenue and Centre Street south. When a fifth classroom was required, it was located on the second floor (since removed) of the Tergesen General Store at the corner of First Avenue and Centre Street south. This period of rapid expansion was under the guidance and supervision of Mr. B. Hodkinson, who had arrived from England in 1912 to assume the duties of school principal.<sup>5</sup>

The introduction of high school instruction in Gimli came as a natural extension of growth from the elementary grades. Admission to secondary education was considered as a right not a privilege; and ability was the sole limiting factor. Secondary education was made

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<sup>5</sup>The above account is condensed from Gimli Schools--Past and Future, an article written by Mrs. E. Howard. The Milestone, Gimli Collegiate Institute, 1955-56. pp. 2-4.

financially possible for the community through the provisions of the provincial school legislation of 1888. This amendment to the Public Schools Act provided special grants to intermediate departments in elementary schools.

The next major advance in the Gimli School District came in 1915 with the erection of a new school--a six-room brick structure. It was planned to use four rooms for the elementary grades and two rooms for the high school. Its construction featured the most modern conveniences and school equipment available at that time, even to the extent of being wired for electricity. Mr. Halldor Sigurdson of Winnipeg was the contractor. (Hydro-electric power had not extended north to Gimli at that time, and when it did, the Depression was at its height. When the school was finally connected, the original wiring was found to be defective and had to be replaced.)

The old school buildings were removed in preparation for the erection of the new school on the same site. The original school, built in 1900, was moved south across the street to its present location at 66 Second Avenue. The other building, erected in 1911, was sold to Mr. J. Greenberg and was moved to 66 First Avenue where it has since become incorporated as the groceries section of the large store.

The expenditure of \$20,000. for a new school was a large undertaking for the size of the community at that time. Much of the credit for the foresight and planning is due to the board members for 1915: Mr. G. O. Thorsteinsson, Chairman; Mr. B. B. Olson, Secretary-Treasurer; and Mr. G. Polsen.

The records of the first teachers in the new school are incomplete. The old school registers, now stored in the library of the Gimli Composite High School, are missing for the years 1915 to 1919. The recollections of local residents<sup>6</sup> indicate that when the school opened in the Fall of 1915, there were only four classrooms in operation. Miss Sigrun Helgason was the first principal and teacher of a Grade Eleven class of students: Barney Peterson, Martha Sveinson, Steina Brynolfson, and Laura Sigurdson. At the end of the school year, these students were required to write their final examinations at Selkirk, where they remained for one week. Miss Olafia Jonsson succeeded Miss Sigrun Helgason in January, 1916 and remained until 1919. From 1916 to 1919 there were four women on the staff. Grades one and two, and grades three and four were each combined into one classroom; Grades five to seven were in a third classroom; and grades eight to eleven occupied the fourth classroom with the principal in charge. Two teachers on Miss Olafia Jonsson's staff were Miss Mabel Joseph, and Mrs. Olafson. Mr. Paul Heibert succeeded Miss Olafia Jonsson in the Fall of 1919. He was principal for only part of the year.

Mr. G. O. Thorsteinsson, a veteran of World War I, took over the principalship of the school in 1920. He was assisted by a "Major" Brian. That year a fifth classroom was put into service. Mr. G. O. Thorsteinsson remained until 1922. When he resigned

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<sup>6</sup>Supplied by Mrs. Laura Sigurdsson and Mr. Frank Olson, in interviews held on July 31, 1965.

and Miss Olafia Jonsson was appointed as his successor, "Major" Brian also left, declaring that no man should have a woman as his superior.

The older residents and former students in Gimli, are loud in their praise of Miss O. Jonsson whom they consider an outstanding educationalist and dedicated teacher. She had come on the staff in 1911 as a primary teacher, and by taking time off to complete her studies, rose to become principal from 1916 to 1919, and again from 1922 to 1925. One of her innovations was a hot-lunch plan for the students living at a distance.<sup>7</sup>

The hot lunches were elaborate productions with the students bringing milk, butter, meat, potatoes, and other vegetables, and the teachers interrupting classes to tend the roast which was cooking in a wood stove at the back of the room, and from which distractingly delicious aromas emanated.

Much of Miss O. Jonsson's success as a principal from 1922 to 1925 was due to the efforts of her assistant, Miss Sigurbjorg Stefansson, a Gold Medallist and holder of a B. A. degree. Miss S. Stefansson joined the staff in 1923 and except for three one-year periods, she remained until her retirement in 1962. Through their work in the high school section, Miss O. Jonsson and Miss S. Stefansson, did much to establish the Gimli Public School as an excellent centre of secondary education. In 1925, Miss O. Jonsson married Reverend E. Melan.

The next two principals following the resignation of Mrs. E. Melan

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<sup>7</sup>The Milestone, (yearbook of Gimli Collegiate Institute) 1955-56  
p. 3.

in 1925 were Mr. R. C. Mulligan, and Mr. A. B. Gillespie. The latter was succeeded by Mr. W. Meldrum in 1929 who guided the school through the first five years of the Depression.

The period of the Depression saw the return of many mature students to the classroom--some to improve their chances of securing employment; others, because no other alternative presented itself to better utilize their time. The increased enrolment provided an additional challenge to the already overburdened teaching staff.

During Mr. W. Meldrum's tenure the financial position of the Gimli School Board was better than that existing in the surrounding school districts. In 1930, the mortgage on the public school was burned in a grand public ceremony. The resulting reduction in overhead expenses enabled the town to continue paying its teachers about \$80. a month and, thereby, retain an excellent staff despite the fact that most school districts found it difficult to pay about \$45. a month.

Mr. W. Meldrum was succeeded in 1935 by Mr. John K. Laxdal. Mr. John K. Laxdal had been a teacher previously on the Gimli Public School staff from 1929 to 1933. He left in 1933 to assume the principalship at Arborg. While there, he demonstrated his ability as an educationalist and community leader. He maintained excellent discipline in his school, with the result that the students were able to get the most out of their studies. Because of this, he was very highly recommended for the principalship at Gimli.

The high school section of the Gimli Public School has been the chief centre of secondary education for the students from the surrounding

school districts. These students were at first required to pay a small fee; later, arrangements were made whereby the municipality contributed towards the maintenance of the high school. While some school districts, such as Winnipeg Beach, and Kjarna, established their own one-room high schools, the arrangement with Gimli remained in operation until the establishment of the Evergreen School Division.

The boundary of the Gimli School District extended one mile north, west, and south of the town limits. Those students who attended from outside these limits and as far north as Arnes, made use of the daily train service. A student rate of train fare was charged which amounted to about one cent a mile. The students arrived at the school at about 7:30 a.m., when they were admitted to the school to complete any unfinished assignments. At the end of the school day, they would remain on the school premises until about 5:00 p.m., then proceed to the sitting-room of the Como Hotel located across the street from the Canadian Pacific Railway station, and there await the arrival of the train at about 7:30 p.m. to bear them home again.

Because of the inconveniences endured by the family, and the expense involved, only the better students were sent to town during the Depression years to further their education. As a result, most of the students were in earnest; and Mr. John K. Laxdal, with the assistance of Miss S. Stefánsson, and a fully-qualified staff, developed for the Gimli Public School the reputation of being one of the foremost high schools in Manitoba for scholarship. The calibre of the teachers and students remained high until after World War II.



During Mr. John K. Laxdal's tenure as principal, the two-room high school became a collegiate institute. The addition of two extra classrooms in 1940, enabled a more satisfactory arrangement of classes and permitted the separation of the grades into individual classrooms.

Mr. John K. Laxdal remained at Gimli until 1947 when he left to join the staff of the Manitoba Provincial Normal School. He was succeeded by Mr. C. D. Voigt who remained until his appointment as an Inspector of Schools in the Dauphin-Ochre Area in 1949.

The first signs of the post-war population explosion made their appearance in Gimli in 1947 when the Grade Seven class was forced to seek accommodation in the Town Hall. In 1948, another temporary classroom was formed in the Gimli Public School basement. The Gimli Memorial Centre was the location of the third extra classroom in 1949.

When Mr. J. F. Morrison became principal in 1949, the town was giving serious consideration to the erection of a new school. No action, however, was taken.

Mr. J. E. Sigurjonsson succeeded Mr. J. F. Morrison in 1950. That year, a second temporary classroom was required in the Gimli Memorial Centre; and, due to an increase in the enrolment of the Grade Twelve class, the school library room was converted into a temporary classroom. In addition, a commercial course was begun in the same year, and more classrooms for its future growth and expansion had to be planned.

In the spring of 1950, the ratepayers voted overwhelmingly in favour of spending \$60,000 on a new collegiate. Work began during the

summer of 1950 on the construction of an eight-room collegiate with provisions for an additional four classrooms should the need arise. The building was located on the block north of the Gimli Public School.

Before the work on the new school was completed, Grades Six and Seven had to relinquish their classrooms in the Gimli Memorial Centre to allow for the implementation of the Town's winter sports activities. These classes were moved into the basement of the uncompleted collegiate in January, 1951. There, classes were conducted to the accompaniment of hammering, sawing, and the breaking of concrete to instal plumbing.

The Gimli Collegiate Institute was formally opened in March, 1951. The high school section moved from its cramped quarters into the new structure, and the elementary grades returned to the old. Mr. J. E. Sigurjonsson was relieved of all responsibility to the elementary school, and Mr. J. C. Gottfried was appointed principal of the Gimli Public School. This marked the first departure in the school district of having all classrooms under the supervision of the secondary school principal. Each principal could now concentrate on the problems peculiar to his own section, with a resulting improvement in services to the school district.

The next phase in the growth and development of education in the Gimli School District was marked by an increased effort by the teachers to provide a complete range of educational activities. The Collegiate developed a diversified programme, including a commercial department, sewing, shop-work, visual education, and sports. All attempts to institute inter-school sports competitions, however, proved

unsuccessful. The elementary school had its own school paper; held annual Christmas and Easter concerts; and offered sewing, shop-work, visual education, and sports. The sustenance of an enriched programme was difficult. Fully-qualified and experienced teachers were required. These could not be obtained because of a province-wide shortage and the lack of an adequate salary scale in the district.

Social as well as educational changes came slowly and must be preceded by a successful public relations campaign to prepare an informed public upon whom the acceptance and sanctioning of progress depends. The idea of teachers meeting to bargain collectively with their employers was difficult for some school boards to accept. The teachers, acting through their official organization, The Manitoba Teachers' Society, began a campaign to inform the ratepayers of the advantages of a collective bargaining agreement for securing and retaining better teachers. School boards objected to the policy of committing future board members to a salary scale which might restrict their bargaining position and result in a loss of control over the teaching staff. In the resulting struggle for special interests, the school principal was placed in an extremely awkward position for while he owed his allegiance to his employer, he also had to serve in the best interests of his chosen profession. Most school principals chose the latter course.

In the Gimli School District, the attempts of The Manitoba Teachers' Society to secure a collective bargaining agreement with the Gimli School Board met with opposition. From 1947 to 1953, the

teachers met with the Board almost every year. On each occasion, the teachers abandoned their objectives and accepted a mutually agreeable collective wage scale. During these years, the practice of having the School Board meet with a group of representatives from the teachers was developed. Inability of the school district to meet the demands of the teachers was the main reason advanced by the Board for not signing a collective bargaining agreement. In 1954, a determined stand was taken by the teachers and Gimli became the first school district in the Evergreen School Division to sign a collective agreement between the Gimli School Board and The Manitoba Teachers' Society. (See Chapter VIII, Manitoba Teachers' Society, Collective bargaining, for further details.

There have been six men who have held the position of principal of the Gimli Collegiate Institute. The first of these was Mr. J. E. Sigurjonsson. He organized the first Commercial Course. His successor in the Fall of 1951 was Mr. J. P. Packota. He was an energetic organizer and took an active interest in sports and community affairs. Before he left in 1954, he guided and established the pattern to follow for a successful salary negotiation between the teachers and the Board. Mr. W. Zyla, the next principal, was born in the Ukraine and came to Canada in 1952. He was made Acting-Principal during the 1954-55 school year, and Principal the following year. Mr. W. Zyla encouraged extra-curricular activities. He was the organizer of the first successful Home and School Association in Gimli. Mr. Norman E. Writht succeeded Mr. W. Zyla in 1956, but he became ill in October.

Mr. Wright passed away on February 19, 1957. Mr. W. Zyla took over as Acting-Principal during Mr. Wright's illness until the end of December, when Mr. G. Wiseman became Principal for the last term of the school year. The last principal of the Gimli Collegiate Institute was Mr. R. Buck, who assumed his position in the Fall of 1957, and remained to become the first principal of the Gimli Composite High School in 1961.

During the last year of operation of the Gimli Collegiate Institute, the staff numbered eleven, including the principal. The staff members were: Mr. R. Buck, principal; Mr. J. Dawson; Mr. J. Keryluk; Mr. D. Liang; Mrs. M. Boyd; Mr. and Mrs. A. Deshauer; Miss K. Taylor; Mr. N. Melnychuk; and Miss S. Stefansson.

In the teaching of languages, Miss S. Stefansson was outstanding. She was well qualified to teach French, Latin, Icelandic, and English, and was usually assigned all four subjects in the high school. From 1923 to 1931, Icelandic was taught whenever there was a demand for it. Gimli was the only school outside of Winnipeg to make use of the provision made by the Department of Education in 1901 placing Icelandic on the Program of Studies as a second language in Grades Nine to Twelve. French and Latin were both offered until late in the decade of 1950 when Latin was dropped because of insufficient demand. French is now the only second language offered.

Mr. John C. Gottfried remained principal of the Gimli Public School (Grades One to Eight) from 1951 until 1956, when he resigned to

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<sup>8</sup>Supplied by Miss S. Stefansson in an interview January 10, 1965.

accept a position on the Goulding School staff after an unsuccessful attempt to increase the number of increments on the collective bargaining agreement. Mr. J. C. Gottfried was succeeded by Mr. S. Yaremchuk who led the teachers in the negotiations which resulted in the acceptance of separate salary schedules for the elementary and secondary school teachers. This considerably weakened the bargaining position of the teachers.

From 1957 to 1961, the school district once again found itself in the position of having too few classrooms for the elementary school enrolment. In 1957, the Gimli Memorial Centre again became the location of a classroom. The following year, the Grade Eight class was moved into the Gimli Collegiate Institute. The location of this classroom considerably restricted the effectiveness of the supervision conducted by the elementary school principal who was the classroom teacher. Because of this, Mr. Michael Moroz, whose classroom was in the main school, began sharing in the responsibility of administration.

In 1959, the elementary school teachers began negotiating with the School Board for proposed changes in their collective agreement. Following the successful conclusion of negotiations in May, the Board notified Mr. S. Yaremchuk that his contract would not be renewed. Mr. Michael Moroz was made principal in his stead.

When the Gimli Composite High School came into operation in the Fall of 1961, the organization of the elementary schools in Gimli was changed. Mr. Michael Moroz moved into the former Gimli Collegiate building to become the principal of Grades Five to Eight.

Mrs. Ellen Magnusson, for many years an excellent elementary teacher in Gimli and the surrounding districts, was made principal of the primary grades in the old Gimli Public School. The schools were then designated as Gimli School District No. 585-1., and Gimli School District No. 585-2.

In the spring of 1965, Mr. Michael Moroz was elevated to the position of Supervising-Principal in anticipation of a large increase in enrolment in the Fall.

The following men have had long service on the Gimli School Board: Mr. Einar Jonasson; Mr. Harry Lawson; Mr. Hannes Kristjanson, who has served as a board member for over twenty-five years including ten years as Chairman of the Board; Stefan Eldjarnsson; Mr. W. J. Arnason; Mr. Harold Bjarnason; Dr. A. B. Ingimundson; Mr. H. R. Tergesen; and Mr. John Haas, who has served as Secretary-Treasurer for twenty years.

Arnes S. D. 586. Arnes School District was incorporated on June 6, 1889 as the Arnes Protestant School District. A meeting was held on July 22, a school board was elected, and the first teacher, J. Magnus Bjarnason who had emigrated from Iceland in 1875, was engaged.<sup>9</sup> The first schoolhouse was erected near the lake at Drunken Point. The Point had derived its name from the fact that the surrounding land was always extremely wet.

During the first few years, classes were held for only three to six months of the year. Regular attendance was difficult to maintain

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<sup>9</sup> Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., pp. 118 and 295.

for the work on the farm took precedence over school work. Yet, despite this handicap, the students were usually able to accomplish the year's work. The first registers of this school are now in the care of a former Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Jon Jonasson of Arnes. Revealed in the nominal rolls are the names of many Icelandic students who later distinguished themselves as scholars, particularly in the political and medical fields. An account of the early school at Arnes written by one of the students, reads as follows:<sup>10</sup>

The Arnes School was much smaller than the one at Gimli, and not nearly so many pupils . . . among them are some who became outstanding in various ways. These included the Benjaminssons, Skuli and Inga; the Hjorleifssons, Leifi, Inga, and Bjorn; the Sigurdssons, Sigurjon, Sigurdur, and Rikka; the Thorvaldsons, Thorbergur, and Thorvaldur, --the latter two being brothers of Sveinn Thorvaldson, mentioned above. Now Thorbergur Thorvaldson, who has earned much distinction in his chosen field, has recently retired from the professorship in Chemistry at the University of Saskatchewan. His brother, the brilliant and versatile student, Thorvaldur, died just before his graduation from Harvard where he was in the same class as Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the world famous explorer and writer. Thorvaldur's untimely death was mourned by all who knew him. Great hopes had been entertained for a brilliant career for his exceptional student, who did so exceedingly well at College, while no doubt working his way through partly at least, as was the case with almost all the Icelandic students in those days.

In 1900, the school district of Arnes was divided into the school districts of Arnes North No. 586, and Arnes South No. 1054. As the early settlers abandoned their original homesteads in the low-lying areas of Drunken Point, the nucleus of the settlement shifted towards the lands along the government road through the colony, now No. 9 highway.

In 1950, the school at Drunken Point was abandoned and a new one was erected a mile north of the village of Arnes. This one-room

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<sup>10</sup>Magnus E. Gudlaugson, Three Times a Pioneer, published in Winnipeg, October 1959. p. 60.



modern structure was designated as the Arnes Protestant School. Catholics have frequently resided in the school district and during the 1964-65 school year two Catholic pupils were in regular attendance. The teacher during the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Jocelyn Hayka. She was in charge of a class of nineteen pupils.

Riverton S. D. 587. An excerpt from a letter from the Icelandic River district, dated April 14, 1886 reveals the educational situation prior to the establishment of the Public School system. "School was held by the Icelandic River for one month only. The teacher was Jon Sigurdsson from Selkirk, a tactful and well informed man."<sup>11</sup> From this information it is evident that school attendance had dwindled to little, or in some winters to nothing, before the public schools were instituted in this, the most populous district of the colony after "The Exodus" in 1878.

The first regular Public School was opened in 1889 with Salin Petirsson as teacher.<sup>12</sup> The classes were conducted in a log house built by Johann Briem at Grund. This building was used until the schoolhouse of the Lundi School District, which bore the name of the old locality, was erected in 1891 on the east side of the Icelandic River, just south of the bridge. This was the first school erected on the town site. The enrolment during the first year was fifty-one pupils.

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<sup>11</sup>Leifur, 111 47.

<sup>12</sup>Ardis, (Yearbook of the Lutheran Women's League of Manitoba), The Columbia Press Ltd., Winnipeg: XXI Edition, 1953. pp. 61-70.

Jon Runolfsson was the first teacher, and Thorgrimur Jonsson, the first Secretary-Treasurer.

Jon Runolfsson was a poet of considerable ability in addition to being an excellent teacher. He is the author of the book "Pogul Leiftur" (Silent Flashes). He also translated considerably from English into Icelandic. His best known translation is that of Tennyson's "Enoch Arden".

In 1916, the old school was divided into two classrooms and high school was taught for the first time. Mrs. Oddur Olafson was the first principal. Senator Thorvaldson was one of the most distinguished scholars of this one-room high.

The first Public School building in Riverton remained in use for almost thirty years before it was replaced by another erected, this time, west of the Icelandic River. The following is a list of teachers who have taught at this school: Gudrun Salina, daughter of Sigfus Petursson; Hildur Sigfusdottir, her sister; Bjorg Thorkelsson; Dr. Gisli J. Gislason of Grand Forks North Dakota; Jon Runolfsson, the poet; Jakobina, daughter of the poet Sigurbjorn Johannsson; Rosa, daughter of Petur Kristoffersson; Estelle Thompson; Jonasina, daughter of Jonas Stefansson of Gimli; Sveinfridur, daughter of Gisli of Loni, north of Gimli; Ingibjorg Bjornsdottir; Hildur J. Johnson; Valgerdur Jonasson; Berta Johnson; Kristin Lilja Kristjansson; Kristbjorg Oddson; Margaret Anderson; Hildur Arnason; and Mrs. Oddur Olafson.

The second public school was a four-room frame structure built in 1919. The entire enrolment during its first year of operation was

accommodated in three classrooms; the fourth remained vacant until 1921. Soon, however, a fifth classroom was required in the basement. When further additional classrooms had to be provided, a new two-room school was erected. The high school classes were then located in the old school--one upstairs and two in the basement. This situation continued until a fourth high school classroom was made in the basement of the old school prior to the completion of the new Riverton Collegiate in 1961.

Among the many principals who have served the Riverton School District, the one with the longest tenure is Mr. Peter Onysko. Both he and his wife taught from 1944, through the difficult and trying years of the fifties, until 1964. Under his capable administration, the school developed from a one-room high into a six-room Collegiate. During this time, it also developed the reputation of being one of the best schools for orderliness and good scholarship. Mr. Peter Onysko's activities were not confined to his obligations to the school. He was also very active in community affairs and on teacher organizations. He served many years in executive positions at both the local and district levels of The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

When the Evergreen School Division No. 22 was organized, Mr. Peter Onysko became the principal of the new Riverton Collegiate. Mrs. Vigdie Petursson was appointed principal of the elementary grades located in the old building.

The Riverton School Board has been fortunate in its selection of capable teachers. To name them all would require too long a list. The

following are those with the longest tenure: Mrs. S. Spring, who served the district over twenty years from 1921 to 1931 and 1953 to 1964: Mrs. Sigga Ejolfson, for many years a primary teacher; Mrs. Vigdis Petursson, the present elementary principal, who has taught almost thirty years in Riverton and the surrounding districts; Mrs. Kristin Freda Benedictson; Vilberg Ejolfson; Agnar Magnusson; Miss Kristin Skulason; and Mrs. Olavia Melan, who taught for many years in the area, and was at one time the principal at Gimli.

Hnausa S. D. 588. About the Hnausa community, which in its beginning was named Breidavik (Broad Harbour), an early reference states: "A community hall was built for the district in 1886, which for many years was used as a schoolhouse and a church hall. . ." <sup>13</sup>

The Hnausa Protestant School District was amongst the first Icelandic districts formed on June 6, 1889. The public school erected that year was named Baldur. It was located by the lakeshore near the Hnausa dock and opposite the home of Stefan Sigurdsson.

In 1934, the original schoolhouse was demolished and a continuation school was constructed about a half mile north of the village of Hnausa on the No. 9, highway. A teacherage was purchased and moved on the site in 1945. This school building is still in use. When the Evergreen School Division was established all secondary school students were transported daily to the Riverton Collegiate, and Hnausa School

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<sup>13</sup>Thorleifur Joakimsson (Jackson), Fra Austri til Vesturs. (From East to West). Winnipeg: Columbia Press, 1921. p. 172.

reverted to a two-room elementary school.<sup>14</sup>

Amongst the teachers who have taught in this school are: Mrs. Olavia Melan, Mr. Frank Olson, Mr. Loli Solmundson, Mrs. Olafson, Mr. and Mrs. Kohut, and Mr. and Mrs. Gus Finnson, who left in 1962 to join the staff of the Gimli Composite High School.

Members of the School Board with outstanding and lengthy service are Mr. Eddie Marteinson, for many years the Chairman of the Board, and Mrs. G. Einarson, a long time Secretary-Treasurer.

A girl's Home Economics Club that teaches sewing through the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture, has been operating in the district for about the past twelve years. A boy's woodworking club has been in operation for the past two years. Both activities are community projects conducted outside the school time.

The teachers for the 1964-65 school year were Mrs. Sigurdson, who was in charge of Grades One to Four, and Mr. Black, who is the principal and in charge of Grades Five to Eight.

Big Island S. D. 589. To the Icelanders, Big Island proved an attractive place for settlement. The island possessed a thick stand of tall timbers and was located en route and adjacent to the better fishing grounds on Lake Winnipeg. Logging companies operating out of Selkirk established camps on the island to add to the general prosperity and opportunities for employment offered to the influx of new settlers.

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<sup>14</sup>Supplied by Mr. Frank Olson, and Mr. Albert Magnusson in interviews held January, 1965.

In addition, a government operated fish hatchery was later established at Gull Harbour on the northern tip of the island. This was the government's first attempt at practicing conservation through replenishing the lake with fish. The hatchery was later moved to its present location on the Dauphin River. All these factors combined to give the settlers of Big Island the prospects of a bright future in their choice of location. The settlement, however, has not prospered, primarily because of the difficulty of maintaining direct contact with the mainland. Today, it is an attractive tourist region accessible by a government operated ferry service running on the half hour during the summer months.

Big Island School District was formed on June 6, 1889. There have been three schools on the Island.<sup>15</sup> The first one constructed was possibly called Grund. A school existed at Gull Harbour, another at Hecla, and a third, the Big Island School, located at the south end of the island. The first school was located at Gull Harbour and was in operation for only a few years. Mrs. Olavia Melan, so frequently mentioned in this work, came from this district.

The Big Island School enrolment in 1889-90 was forty-five pupils. Thirty-eight were between the ages of five and fifteen, and seven were over fifteen years of age.<sup>16</sup>

The school at Hecla is a two-room continuation school. It began as a one-room elementary school. There is evidence that the islanders

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<sup>15</sup>Supplied by Mr. Frank Olson in an interview, January, 1965.

<sup>16</sup>Logberg, June 18, 1890. p. 2.

were far from lagging behind the other communities in educational matters:<sup>17</sup>

In Mikley (Big Island, Hecla Island) Thorfinnur Thorsteinsson, a tactful and well-informed man, taught elementary school for three months in the winter of 1885-86. The teacher's salary was nine dollars a month, in addition to board and lodging. Twenty young people attended the school, which was established by voluntary contributions. It is also mentioned that at Reynistad on the island, school was maintained through the winter before a school district was formed there. This is clear evidence that the islanders were far from lagging behind the other communities in the colony in educational matters. The first teacher there was Jon Runolfsson from Snjoholt, who had come to America in 1879.

One of the first principals at the continuation school at Hecla was Miss Ingibjorg Sigurgeirsson, now Mrs. I. Jonsson. She has served for many years in that capacity, and is at present the editor of Logberg-Heimskringla, an Icelandic weekly. Mr. Ernest Moffat, the brother of Mr. H. P. Moffat, Director of Teacher Training in the Department of Education, has also taught there for many years. Other teachers have been Mr. Frank Olson (1955-56), and Mrs. Gwen Jonsson.

Hecla School has for many years been the only school serving the northern portion of the island. The school children from Gull Harbour have been attending at Hecla. In 1964, the Big Island School to the south ceased operating. During the following school year, Hecla School reverted to an elementary school and the high school students were transported daily to the Riverton Collegiate.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>18</sup>Personal communication from Mr. G. Bardarson, December 12, 1964.

The Chairman of the Big Island School District has, for many years, been Mr. Helgi G. Tomasson. The long time Secretary-Treasurer has been Mr. Einar Solmundson.

Mr. G. Bardarson has been the elementary school teacher at Hecla School for the 1964-65 school year. He was in charge of a class with an enrolment of twenty-one.

Kjarna S. D. 647. Kjarna School District was established on April 11, 1891.<sup>19</sup> For the first ten years, the classes were conducted in a log house located north of Willow River. The house had been originally erected for church services in the year 1879, and was the chapel (church hall) of the Willow Point congregation until a church was built in 1905.<sup>20</sup> Mr. Benedikt Arason became the chairman of the Board, and Baldvin Jonsson, the secretary. The following men were also elected to the school board: Sveinn Kristjansson in Framnes, Valdimar Thorsteinsson of Hvammur, and Joseph Sigurdsson of Melsted.<sup>21</sup>

In 1900 the school district was divided and a new one was formed in the north part of the community. It became the Minerva School District which operated as a one-room elementary school until it closed in 1957 because of its location near the runways of the Royal Canadian Air Force Station. The students have since been transported daily to the Gimli elementary schools.

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<sup>19</sup>School District Formation Records Vol. 1, Department of Education.

<sup>20</sup>Supplied by Mrs. Trausti Isfeld, in an interview January 9, 1965.

<sup>21</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, op. cit., p. 118.



In 1901, a schoolhouse was built on the Husavik farmstead; that building was sold in 1918 and a new schoolhouse was constructed. Two were later added--one in 1951, and the other in 1957, at which time the building was modernized and waterworks was installed.

Grades Nine and Ten have been taught by correspondence for many years. Regular high school classes were begun in 1951 when the additional room was constructed.

The earliest financial statement available for the school district is dated 1895; the earliest school register, 1908. Most of the early school registers have been destroyed.

Mr. Kris Kernested has served as chairman of the Board for twenty years. At one time he wrote a short account on the development of the Kjarna School District.

Since the formation of the Evergreen School Division, Kjarna School has maintained two classrooms--one for Grades One to Four, and the other for Grades Five to Eight. The teachers for the 1964-65 school year were Mrs. Breland, and Mr. Ptashynski.

Geysir S. D. 776. Geysir School District was established on April 16, 1894, south west of Riverton in the Municipality of Bifrost.<sup>22</sup>

The first school had been constructed prior to the formation of the school district, and classes were held in the Fall of 1889.<sup>23</sup> This

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<sup>22</sup> School District Formation Records, Vol. 1, Department of Education.

<sup>23</sup> Personal communication from Mr. Jon Palsson, January 20, 1965.

school was of rough log construction. The poplar boards were hewn by hand. The school was located on the south west quarter of Section 27, Township 22, Range 3 E. This school was in operation for six or seven months a year, with an attendance of about twenty pupils.

In 1899, the first schoolhouse was abandoned and a larger one was erected close to the main road through the community near what is now Highway 68. This new structure was a storey and a half frame building with rooms upstairs and on the main floor. Two teachers were employed until other school districts were formed in the vicinity to enrol part of the student population, which had remained at about fifty. The new School Districts were Laufas, Island, Bjarmi, and Ardal, all of which are located proximate to the Geysir community. The schoolhouse remained in use for almost a half century and served the community as a church, concert hall, Sunday School, and for all meetings of importance in the community.

In 1949, the old Geysir school building was replaced with a more modern structure. The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Ellen Borgfjord. She was in charge of a class of twenty-three pupils.

Minerva S. D. 1045. Minerva School District was formed on January 9, 1900 when the Kjarna School District was reorganized.<sup>24</sup> The majority of the settlers in the district are of Icelandic descent.

The first one-room elementary school was located on the present

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<sup>24</sup> School District Formation Records, Vol. 11, Department of Education.

school site about one mile west of Gimli. This school was used until 1952, when a modern one-room frame structure was erected on a new site a half mile west of the old one.<sup>25</sup> Mr. Michael Shewaga taught in the new school from 1952 to 1957 when the runways of the R. C. A. F. Station at Gimli were extended and the interference from the noise of planes landing and taking off was considered a detriment to effective teaching, and the location a threat to the lives of the pupils. The school building was then moved back to its original site. There, it has remained unused to the present time. The elementary pupils are transported to the Gimli Public School and transportation is provided for the secondary school students to the new Gimli Composite High School.

In 1956, an effective 4-H Club program was instituted by Mr. Raymond Sigurdson. The Club is still in operation.

Arnes South S. D. 1054. The Arnes South School District was formed on February 2, 1900.<sup>26</sup> The school building is located three miles north of Camp Morton near Highway No. 9, on the S.E. 1/4 of Section 32, Township 20, Range 4 E. It is in a predominantly Icelandic settlement.

In the spring of 1950, a new one-room school of cinderblock construction was erected on the original site.<sup>27</sup> The old schoolhouse

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<sup>25</sup>Supplied by Mr. Michael Shewaga in an interview, February 16, 1965.

<sup>26</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Asst. Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>27</sup>Supplied by Mrs. Laura Gottfried in an interview, February 1, 1965.

was sold and removed. Due to difficulties encountered in the construction, the new school was opened but never completed.

A number of prominent elementary school teachers now serving in the Evergreen School Division, received their early teaching experience at the Arnes South School. Chief amongst these are Miss Jorunn Thordarson, for many years a primary specialist in the Gimli district, and Mrs. Ellen Magnusson, the present principal of the Gimli Public School No. 1. Mrs. Ellen Magnusson taught at Arnes South for five years.

The teacher during the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Bill Doll. There were thirteen pupils enrolled. Mrs. Leifur Helgason, the present Secretary-Treasurer has served in the same capacity since the new school was erected. Prior to that, Mrs. Holmfridur Jonatanson held the position for twenty years.

Felsendorf S. D. 1096. Felsendorf School District was formed on January 2, 1901.<sup>28</sup> It was one of the first in the Division to be formed by the settlers from Eastern Europe.

Two schools were erected--Felsendorf North, and Felsendorf South. Both were one-room elementary schools with a three-room teacherage. Felsendorf School (South) was located on the Ridge about five miles west of Gimli, and four miles north west of it was located Felsendorf School (North).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Asst. Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>29</sup>Supplied by Mr. Peter Wesley in an interview February 17, 1965.

Both schools had heavy enrolments during the early years. Such family names as: Rech, Koch, Kaminski, Schnerch, Paracholski, and Berezowski, are still common in the district and appear frequently on the school registers.

The Sisters of St. Benedict have conducted school at Felsendorf as have many lay teachers in the district. Mr. Frank Olson taught there during the 1921-22 school year. He had a class of sixty-nine pupils enrolled in Grades One to Six. The Chairman of the Board was Mr. Michael Rojascki; the Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Peter Rech; and one of the trustees was Mr. John Koch.

The school district ceased operating in 1957 due to insufficient enrolment. The pupils from Felsendorf School (North) began attending Park School, while those from Felsendorf School (South) enrolled at either the Frazerwood or Lilac schools.

In 1964, the school buildings of the Felsendorf School (North) were sold and removed from the site.

Foley S. D. 1125. Foley School District was formed on June 25, 1901.<sup>30</sup> It is a predominantly Ukrainian settlement.

The one-room elementary school constructed in 1901 has become known for the extremely high enrolment it has maintained over the years.<sup>31</sup> Mr. Peter Susky, who taught in the school during the 1930's, had at one time an enrolment of almost eighty pupils in Grades One to Eight.

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<sup>30</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Asst. Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>31</sup>Supplied by Mr. Michael Shewaga in an interview February 2, 1965.

In 1952, the old school and its records were destroyed by fire. It has been replaced with a modern one-room frame structure. There is also a teacherage available on the premises.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss E. Yurchi.

Willow Creek S. D. 1138. The Willow Creek settlement along with that at Felsendorf was one of the first to be homesteaded by immigrants from Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup> Amongst the earliest arrivals were Mr. P. Lupichuk, and his brother who came with their wives and families to acquire homesteads in 1897. Mr. Peter Shewaga arrived in 1898. There were also three Jewish families amongst the first arrivals. One was a blacksmith by trade and the others were farmers.

The School District which is located about twelve miles west of Gimli, was formed on June 25, 1901.<sup>33</sup> Prior to its formation, an itinerant school teacher had taught in the homes for the first three or four years. The first schoolhouse was built in 1901. It was a log structure. A teacherage was later erected.

In 1961, the school was closed and the elementary pupils were transported by van to the Gimli Public School. The Evergreen School Division provides daily bus transportation for the high school students to the Gimli Composite High School.

Laufas S. D. 1211. Laufas School District was formed on

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Asst. Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

January 6, 1903.<sup>34</sup> The first school building was located on the S. E. 1/4 of Section 2, Township 23, Range 3 E.<sup>35</sup> This school had been purchased and moved in from Howardville. In 1961, the old school was sold for ten dollars and removed. A new and modern one-room elementary school was erected on the same site. The original teacherage is still in use.

The annual enrolment in the first school frequently reached forty-five, in Grades One to Eight. There has been a steady decline over the past ten years so that now the figure is about twenty-five.

During the 1964-65 school year, the School Districts of Island and Laufas have combined their efforts in a modified form of consolidation. Grades One to Four are being transported to Island School, while Grades Five to Eight are cared for at Laufas School. A van provides transportation. The experiment has not proven successful and next year Laufas School will again have Grades One to Eight.

For the first few years after the formation of the school district, no classes were held during the months of January and February. The first teacher to arrive in 1903 was Miss Serra Sigvaldson, who taught until Christmas. Miss Bella Smith succeeded her for the months of March to June. Other teachers who served during the earlier years were Miss Anna Bjarnason, Miss Lilja Guttormson, Miss Pauline Palsson, Miss Anna Marteinson, Mrs. Sigga Eyjolfson, Eddie Borgfjord,

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<sup>34</sup>School District Formation Records, Vol. 11, Department of Education.

<sup>35</sup>Supplied by Mrs. M. Gislason in an interview, February 11, 1965.

Mrs. Svava Wagner, and Irene Eyjolfson. Mr. Warkentin, and Mr. Wolosky have taught in the school for the past few years. The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Diane Obach. She had a class of twenty-three pupils.

Mr. and Mrs. Mundi Gislason who are now retired in Gimli, for many years operated a farm located south of the school. From the years 1904 to 1947, they have boarded twenty different teachers at their home.

Some of the former Secretary-Treasurers of the Laufas School District have been Steini Palsson, George Boundy, and Laugi Johannson.

Ardal (Arborg) S. D. 1291. The first school erected in the Ardal School District was located about one mile west of the centre of the village of Arborg.<sup>36</sup> It was a temporary structure, and the first classes were conducted there by Mr. B. I. Sigvaldason in 1904. Mr. B. I. Sigvaldason later became the Reeve of the Municipality of Bifrost.

The first permanent school building was erected within the village on a lot east of the present railway tracks. This school continued in operation until 1911, when a new one was built on the present site.<sup>37</sup>

The teachers employed in the first permanent school were: Dr. Palsson (1905-06), Mr. B. I. Sigvaldason (1906-07), Mr. I. W. S. Duncan (1907-08), Mr. M. O. Gudmundson (1908-09), Miss Olson (1909-10). During the school year 1910-11, the increase in enrolment necessitated the use of an additional temporary classroom. The teachers employed that

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<sup>36</sup>Supplied by Mr. Victor Shebeski in an interview February 9, 1965.

<sup>37</sup>Supplied by Mr. H. Benson, and Mr. G. Lysack in interviews conducted January 20, 1965.



year were Miss Kerr, and Miss Bardal.

During each year from 1904 to 1911, classes were held from early spring until late in the autumn. During the winter months, the school was closed.

In 1912, a two-room school was constructed on the present school site, and in 1923 it was enlarged into a four-room school. For many years high school classes were offered to Grade Ten. Later Grade Eleven was added. The students were able to proceed into Grade Twelve at the school conducted by the Sisters of St. Benedict.

Among the more notable principals who have held office in this four-room school are: Mr. Skidmore, who remained four years during the 1920's; Mr. J. K. Laxdal, who was the principal from 1933 to 1935, and is now the Vice-Principal of the Manitoba Teachers College; Mr. Michael Mazur; and Miss O. Johnson.

Two teachers who have contributed much in time and effort to the students of the district are Miss O. Johnson, and Miss K. Skulason. Miss O. Johnson served for many years as a teacher and principal, and Miss E. Skulason has taught there for fourteen years.

In 1950, a fire destroyed the four-room school and all the registers. The Ardal Public School which is at present used as the elementary school was built in 1950. From 1950 to 1960, Grades One to Eleven were taught in its seven classrooms. Prior to the opening of the new Arborg Collegiate in 1961, additional classrooms had to be rented in the Arborg Town Hall. For the past five years, Mr. George Lysack has been the elementary school principal in the old

Ardal Public School.

The children in this primarily agricultural community have been very active in 4-H Club work. Assistance has always been available from the Agricultural Representative, Mr. A. Chambers, stationed at Arborg. Instruction has been offered in sewing and woodworking. Mr. B. Cosford has devoted much time and effort assisting the boys in their 4-H Club activities. In 1959, a Home and School Association was formed at Arborg. Meetings are held once a month during the school year.

Framnes S. D. 1293. Framnes School District is located in the Municipality of Bifrost. The School District was formed by Icelandic Settlers on June 3, 1904.<sup>38</sup> The first school built in the same year, had an enrolment of seventeen. The schoolhouse is situated on River Lot 33, Township 22, Range 2 E.

The present school, a one-room and fully-modern frame building, was constructed in 1944.<sup>39</sup> The teacher during the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Victor Borgfjord. He was in charge of a class of twenty-three pupils in grades one to eight.

Melnice S. D. 1295. Melnice School is located in Petersfield near the southern boundary of the Evergreen School Division. It is not far from Pleasant Home, the site of the first Ukrainian settlement

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<sup>38</sup>School District Formation Records, Vol. 11, Department of Education.

<sup>39</sup>Personal communication from Mr. Victor Borgfjord, January 12, 1965.

in the area. The present residents are mainly Ukrainian in origin and Greek-Catholic.

Melnice School District was formed on June 4, 1904.<sup>40</sup> The first school was erected in 1906. Fifty pupils were enrolled in the first class. Early records are not available since the district has been plagued by many fires.

The teacher during the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Jean M. Chartrand. She had a class of seventeen pupils in Grades One to Eight.<sup>41</sup>

Winnipeg Beach S. D. 1331. Winnipeg Beach School District was formed shortly after the turn of the century on March 4, 1905.<sup>42</sup> The first school house was erected on the site of the present school grounds. It was a one-room frame building.

Two teachers with long service in the first school were: Mr. Fred Bowsfield, who continued as principal when the school was enlarged, and Mr. Frank Olson, who has taught over forty years in the schools of the Evergreen Division.

In 1920, three rooms were added to the original structure.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>41</sup>Personal communication from Mrs. Jean M. Chartrand November 26, 1964.

<sup>42</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>43</sup>Supplied by Mr. J. E. Dawson in an interview, January 24, 1965.

This building served the educational needs of the community until 1946. To accommodate an increase in enrolment due to an influx of inhabitants after World War II, a separate one-room frame building was erected north of the main school building in 1946. It was immediately dubbed "The Apple Box". As the enrolment continued to increase, an additional classroom was rented in the Town Hall. These temporary measures were finally abandoned in 1949 and a modern six-room frame stucco building was constructed. The old schoolhouse was demolished. The school bell from the original one-room school was kept and installed in the new structure.

The year of the Winnipeg Flood, 1950, was a difficult one for the Winnipeg Beach School. Many summer cottage owners, who were also ratepayers in the school district, sought temporary relief from the Flood by moving to Winnipeg Beach. Temporary measures were employed to accommodate the resulting influx of students. The city of Winnipeg provided some assistance for the relief of Flood victims.

In 1952, an increase in Airforce personnel and their dependants aggravated an already serious housing shortage at Gimli. To help alleviate the housing situation, the Department of National Defence constructed a number of Permanent Married Quarters at R.C.A.F. Base, Gimli. These were not sufficient to accommodate all the dependants and many rented homes at Winnipeg Beach. The resulting influx of residents again necessitated the use of the one-room school, "The Apple Box". From 1952 to the present, the school has maintained seven classrooms.

During the period of greatest expansion, 1945-60, the Winnipeg Beach School was under the guidance of Mr. J. E. Dawson. For the last few years, he was assisted in the high school section by Mr. J. Keryluk. When the Evergreen School Division was formed, Mr. J. E. Dawson was given a Grade Eleven class in Whytewold Beach, and Mr. J. Keryluk was moved to Gimli Composite High School.

Winnipeg Beach School reverted to an elementary school in 1959. Mr. K. Hladun was appointed as principal in 1961, and still retains that position.

Outstanding amongst those who have served in this school district are: Mr. J. W. Woods, who has been a Chairman of the Board for almost thirty-five years; Mr. J. W. Russin, Secretary-Treasurer for thirty years; Mrs. D. G. Pilatzke, who has been an elementary teacher in the school for twenty-three years and is at present teaching Grades Three and Four; Miss E. Greenberg; and Mr. J. E. Dawson, who served as principal for fifteen years.

The school and community have always been sport conscious and in 1945 the Bantam B. Manitoba Hockey Champions came from the Winnipeg Beach School.

Sandridge S. D. 1363. Sandridge School District was formed on March 29, 1906.<sup>44</sup> It is situated in the Local Government District of Armstrong.

The one-room rural school was erected on the S.W. 1/4 of

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<sup>44</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

Section 35, Township 18, Range 1 West.

The school is no longer in operation.<sup>45</sup>

Whytewold Beach S. D. 1386. Whytewold Beach School District was established on June 2, 1906.<sup>46</sup> The first one-room elementary school was constructed the same year on the N. E. 1/4 of Section 10, Township 17, Range 4 E. by the old Gimli Road. In 1923, a second classroom was added to the original structure. Whytewold School continued as a two-room school until 1954, when the building was sold and a new four-room fully-modern frame structure was erected on the original site. A four-room teacherage was built in 1956.

The old registers which are stored in the new school date back to 1910-11. These registers reveal that in 1910, the members of the School Board were R. W. Wilson; H. A. McPherson; R. McKenzie; and J. H. Pilatzke, the Secretary-Treasurer. There were two teachers employed that year, one for each term. They were E. M. Duddles, and Jennie Sutherland. Mr. J. W. Shakespeare, a very capable teacher, succeeded Jennie Sutherland and remained until 1923, when a second classroom was added. Thereafter, one room was used for Grades One to Six, and the other for Grades Seven to Eleven.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Personal communication with Mr. J. A. Cameron, Official Trustee, Department of Education, January, 1965.

<sup>46</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>47</sup> Supplied by Mrs. Neustader, and Miss Helen Braun in an interview February 16, 1965.

The first principal of the two-room school was Mr. Simpson. Miss Winnifred Martin, now Mrs. Gordon McPherson, came as an assistant to teach the elementary grades. She was succeeded in 1934 by Alice McKnight, who remained until 1940. Mr. E. S. Quelch succeeded Mr. Simpson as principal. Other well-known teachers who have taught in this two-room school were Mrs. Olavia Melan, and Mr. Franz Solmundson.

In 1951, a serious and protracted disagreement arose between the permanent and the summer residents, who were also ratepayers in the school district, over the proposed construction of a new school. The permanent residents preferred a large building while the campers felt that a smaller one would be adequate. As a result of this impasse, the School District was placed under the administration of Mr. McDonald, Official Trustee from the Department of Education. A compromise was reached in 1954 with the construction of a new four-room school.

Mr. Walter Yanchyshyn served about four years as the principal of the new school. His wife taught one of the elementary grades. In 1959, Mr. Walter Yanchyshyn left to teach in Greater Winnipeg. He has recently been appointed by the Department of Education to the position of Assistant Supervisor of Special Schools.

In 1959, one room was rented by the Evergreen School Division for a Grade Eleven class under Mr. J. Dawson. The following year, Miss Helen Braun taught Grade Nine. Thereafter, three rooms were used for the elementary grades while the fourth remained unused. Mrs. Neustadter became the elementary school principal. In January, 1965, the third classroom was closed due to insufficient enrolment. For the

remainder of the school year, Mrs. Neustadter was in charge of Grade Six to Eight in one classroom while Miss Helen Braun had Grades One to Five in another. There was a combined enrolment of sixty-three pupils.

Striy S. D. 1424. This School District was originally included in the Evergreen School Division. In 1960, it became part of the Interlake School Division No. 21.

Vidir S. D. 1460. Vidir School District is located north-west of the village of Arborg in the Municipality of Bifrost. It was formed on May 6, 1908, and the first one-room elementary school was built in 1909.<sup>48</sup> The school is located on the S. E. 1/4 of Section 30, Township 23, Range 2 E.

The first class had an enrolment of eight pupils.<sup>49</sup> For the first few years the school was open only three months out of the year.

The present school is a modern one-room frame building erected in 1938. There is a maple and spruce hedge around the well kept school grounds. Mr. J. P. Sorokowski, was the teacher during the 1964-65 school year. He had a class of nineteen pupils.

The residents of the district are predominantly Lutheran and of Icelandic origin.

Bjarmi S. D. 1461. Bjarmi School District was formed on

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<sup>48</sup>School District Formation Records, Vol. 111, Department of Education.

<sup>49</sup>Personal communication from Mr. J. P. Sorokowski, January 8, 1965.



May 6, 1908.<sup>50</sup> The first school building was erected about three miles north of Arborg, however, since this was too far out of the way for many of the children, it was moved to the present site another mile farther north on the N. W. 1/4 of Section 2, Township 23, Range 2 E. In 1925, a teacherage was purchased and hauled by horse teams to the school grounds. In 1948, the old school was removed and a new one-room elementary school with a full basement was constructed.<sup>51</sup>

The original settlement was established by the Icelanders. Since many devoted more time to fishing than developing the homesteads, the settlement was thrown open to anyone seeking land. Many Eastern Europeans arrived at the turn of the century and today the majority of the farmers in this community are of Ukrainian origin.

For many years the School District was deeply in debt. Conditions were bad for the teachers because of the constant interference in the classroom by members of the Board trying to effect economies. One year there were four different teachers engaged. After 1950, the salary and working conditions of the teachers began to improve. That year the old teacherage was abandoned and a new three-room modern structure was built.

The Sisters of St. Benedict from their Motherhouse at Arborg, came to teach in this school. They taught there from 1941 to 1948. The ratepayers were well satisfied with their work.

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<sup>51</sup>Supplied by Mr. Walter Firman in an interview February 13, 1965.

Mr. Walter Firman, a long time resident in the district, has been the Secretary-Treasurer of the school district for the past twenty-five years.

The teacher during the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Peter Michael. He has served in the district for four years. There are twelve children enrolled in his class.

Dniester S. D. 1463. Dniester School District was formed on June 19, 1908.<sup>52</sup> When the first one-room school was built the same year, the first teacher, Mr. Chikowski, was required to hold classes for two months in Mr. Sochaski's home before the school was ready for occupancy. Thereafter, classes were held regularly for ten months of the year. Later a second classroom was added to the original structure to accommodate a high school class to be taught through correspondence. In 1937, this school was destroyed.<sup>53</sup>

Before the present school and two-room teacherage was erected, a portion of the school district withdrew on May 18, 1937, to form the Lilac School District.

The Dniester School District is one of the predominantly Ukrainian settlements in the Evergreen School Division. For many years the culture and traditions of the Ukraine were perpetuated in this community through the organization of clubs promoting cultural activities.

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<sup>52</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>53</sup>Supplied by Mrs. William Senkow in an interview February 11, 1965.

The Ukrainian People's Home maintained a Ukrainian lending library in the district. This library had at one time over four hundred books for distribution. For many years the Ukrainian language was taught in the school after four o'clock.

A Youth Club organized by the teachers, operated from 1922 to about 1940. One of the most active organizers and teachers was Mr. Greg Marko, a talented and very capable teacher. The Youth Club devoted much time to the Arts and Crafts such as sewing, knitting, and fine needle and embroidery work. A softball league was organized for the spring and summer months with the whole community taking an active interest in the weekly contests. Even a political rally such as that held by the now President of the Exchequer Court of Canada, Mr. Justice Thorson, was the occasion for a softball competition for the Thorson Trophy held at Dniester. During the winter months, as many as seven concerts were presented in the Ukrainian language. The proceeds were used to finance the summer activities. These community projects were engaged in until the outbreak of World War II, when most of the youths left to serve in the armed forces.

Teachers with long tenure at the Dniester School are Mr. Greg Marko, and Mr. Peter Wesley.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. William Senkow.

Bradbury S. D. 1481. Bradbury School District was formed on February 15, 1909.<sup>54</sup> The first school was built on the scenic

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<sup>54</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

Ridge Road which was the original trail used by the early settlers between Faxe and Arborg. In 1938, the school and all of its records were destroyed by fire. The new school was erected on its present location about a mile north east of the old site as a result of a petition forwarded to Mr. Tomlinson, the Official Trustee for the Department of Education. The two-room teacherage was moved from the old site to that of the new school.<sup>55</sup>

An examination of the more recent school registers reveals that the following have taught at Bradbury School since 1938: Lily Dee, Adolphe Sochaski, Vida McCutcheon, Mrs. Polly Cherniak, E. Matheson, Gudrun Johnson, Jenny Hyka, George Sech, Inga Sigurdson, and Michael Shewaga who has been there for the past seven years.

The school is under the administration of Mr. J. A. Cameron, the Official Trustee for the Department of Education.

Berlo S. D. 1482. Berlo School District was established on February 15, 1909.<sup>56</sup> The first school was erected the same year. It was called Bismark School by the predominantly German settlers in the district. The carpenter in charge of construction, Mr. Michael Gottfried, relates that the floor boards had to be sawn by hand from the logs. By this means the workers were sometimes able to produce 500 board feet a day.

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<sup>55</sup>Supplied by Mr. Michael Shewaga in an interview February 16, 1965.

<sup>56</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

The first teacher, Mr. Gebler, could not be secured until the Fall of 1910. His successor was Mr. Gabour. No records of the early teachers are available since the school and all the registers were destroyed by fire in 1949. Other teachers recalled by the residents of the district are Mr. William Chimchak, and Miss Laura Solmundson (Mrs. Laura Tergesen).<sup>57</sup>

The original school building was constructed as a one-room school. Within a few years, however, the structure had to be enlarged. A teacherage was also added. This school building was destroyed by fire in 1949.

There was considerable disagreement amongst the ratepayers about the location of the proposed new school. As a result of protracted arguments, construction was delayed for three years before the new building was again located on its original site. During the interval, the home of Mr. Henry Haas was rented and used as a school-house. The present school, completed in 1952, has running water, indoor toilet facilities, and oil heat. The name was changed from Bismark School to Berlo School.

The Sisters of Service have taught at Berlo since 1939. The first teacher was Sister A. Walsh.

The present Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Stanley Marks, has held office for many years.

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<sup>57</sup>Supplied by Mr. Stanley Marks in an interview January 5, 1965.

Park S. D. 1491. Park School District 1491 was formed on April 1, 1909.<sup>58</sup> The district was settled by immigrants from Eastern Europe. Those of Ukrainian ancestry predominate. Among the early arrivals to this district in 1901 were Mr. John Pistawka, and Mr. Marchuk.

The first school erected in 1909 was used for about six years and then converted into a four-room teacherage. A larger one-room school, a 24 ft. by 36 ft. frame building, was erected by Mr. Michael Gottfried. The building is still in use.

The first teacher was Mr. William Mondryk who remained for the first four years.<sup>59</sup> Other teachers with long service are: Mr. Jenkins, Mr. William Jerowski, and Mr. William Sklepkowich.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Edward Poworoznick. He has served the district for the past five years. The class has an enrolment of thirteen.

Zbruch S. D. 1496. Zbruch School District was originally included in the Evergreen School Division. It now forms part of the Interlake School Division No. 21.

Polsen S. D. 1523. The Polsen School District is now part of the Interlake School Division although it was originally in the Evergreen School Division.

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<sup>58</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>59</sup>Supplied by Mr. Edward Poworoznick, in an interview February 19, 1965.

Rembrandt S. D. 1570. Rembrandt School District was formed on March 30, 1911.<sup>60</sup> Most of the early settlers came from Eastern Europe.

The first school building was erected in the village of Rembrandt but the settlement was so scattered that shortly after, a second school was erected one and a half miles south of the village near the present church. These schools were built by Michael Gottfried who, during the period of early settlement, constructed sixteen rural schools in the surrounding area.<sup>61</sup> Both of the original schools and their records were later destroyed by fire and a large new one-room school and teacherage were erected at the present school site near Highway No. 7., on the S. W. 1/4 of Section 11, Township 21, Range 2 E. This school has remained in use to the present.

Some of the first teachers in the district whose names can still be recalled by the early settlers are: Mr. Stewart, Miss Nikorchuk, and Mr. Solar.

In 1938, Mrs. Mary Solar came to teach at Rembrandt School and has remained for the past twenty-eight years. She is an outstanding country school teacher and has contributed much to the advancement of education in the district. Her students distinguish themselves in the secondary schools of the Division.

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<sup>60</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>61</sup> Supplied by Mrs. Mary Solar, in an interview February 11, 1965.

When Mrs. Mary Solar began teaching in 1938, she took charge of a class of sixty students in Grades One to Ten. From 1942 to 1959, the enrolment remained constant at about fifty in Grades One to Nine. Thereafter, the Grade Nine students were transported to the secondary school at Arborg. Since then, the enrolment has shown a steady decline and is now twenty-five.

About fifteen years ago, Mrs. Mary Solar organized a number of 4-H Garden Clubs at her school. One year the Potato Club won the Kiwanis Trophy. There has been very little 4-H Club activity for the past five years.

Rembrandt School has for many years been under the control of an Official Trustee of the Department of Education.

The marked decline in enrolment in many of the rural schools of the Division has led to an effort towards consolidation. Negotiations are now in progress to determine the advisability of erecting a three or four room school to serve the needs of the Hasgings, Fyrer, Jaroslaw, and Rembrandt school districts.

Jaroslaw S. D. 1649. Jaroslaw School District was formed on January 7, 1913.<sup>62</sup> The school is located north west of Arnes on the N. E. 1/4 of Section 27, Township 21, Range 3 E., in a predominantly Polish settlement.

The earliest school registers available reveal that in 1915,

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<sup>62</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.



Stephen Kaczkowski, the teacher, had a class of fifty students, many in their late "teens", enrolled in Grades One and Two. By the following year the enrolment had dropped to twenty-three, because the students married and took up homesteads. The teacher for the 1916 school year was Mr. A. D. Hillcoff. In 1919, a night class was conducted by Mr. J. J. Hawryluk during the winter months. Those in attendance ranged in ages from sixteen to thirty-nine. There were twenty-nine students enrolled for the Night Classes presumably in English. Mr. W. S. Chimchak was a teacher at this school for the 1920-21 school year.

The trustees elected for the year 1915 were: Stanislaw Orzeck, for a two-year term of office; John Dzydz, the Chairman, for a three-year term; Philip Andruschak, for a one-year term. The Secretary-Treasurer was Jack Howell. Mr. John Dzydz served for many years as the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District and was soon followed by Mr. Joseph Orzeck who has held that office for the past twenty-three years.<sup>63</sup>

The present fully-modern schoolhouse with attached teacherage was built in 1955 on the same site as the old school. It is equipped with such modern conveniences as running water, oil heat, and all the electrical appliances necessary for the teacherage and school.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. M. Fydirchuk. There were thirteen children enrolled.

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<sup>63</sup>Supplied by Mr. M. Fydirchuk, in an interview February 1, 1965.

Malonton S. D. 1653. The Malonton School District was formed on February 17, 1913.<sup>64</sup> Two schools were eventually built to serve the needs of the district. The first, a one-room frame building, was built in 1913 on Section 28, Township 19, Range 2 E. About five years later, another one-room school was built in the village. It was located on Section 26, Township 18, Range 2 E. The schools were then designated as Malonton North School, and Malonton South School. Both schools eventually acquired teacherages and were in constant use until about 1952 when the Malonton North School was closed. The buildings were sold and removed in 1964. The Malonton South School was still in operation during the 1964-65 school year.<sup>65</sup>

Most of the school registers from both schools have been preserved and are stored away in the Malonton South School. These registers reveal that for the first few years the School District was under the control of an elected School Board. During the school year of 1917-18, the Board members were: Anton Reichert, Peter Benn, Martin Lipinsky, and Anton Wawzienkewich, the Secretary-Treasurer. By 1920, the affairs of the school had passed under the control of Mr. Ira Stratton, the Official Trustee for the Department of Education. The present Official Trustee is Mr. J. A. Cameron.

The majority of the early settlers were immigrants from Eastern

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<sup>64</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>65</sup>Supplied by Mr. J. Humeny in an interview February 8, 1965.

Europe of Polish, German, and Ukrainian descent. Of the many prominent family names found listed in the school registers that of the Smerchanski family recurs most frequently. Mark Smerchanski, a graduate mining engineer, and a former student at Malonton, served one term on the Board of Directors of the University of Manitoba. He has also distinguished himself for his part in the development and promotion of Manitoba industries.

The following are outstanding amongst the teachers who have served in the Malonton North School: A. B. Romanow (1917-18), John Watcyk, who is at present a medical doctor at Fort William; Maude Werseen; Margaret Laurie; Michael Doroschuk, who served in both schools for more than ten years; and Mr. M. W. Moroz. The following have had long service in the Malonton North School: Miss Kemp Cassar, and Michael Doroschuk.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. J. Humeny. There were twelve pupils enrolled.

Meleb S. D. 1665. The villages of Frazerwood and Meleb were settled about the same time by immigrants from Eastern Europe. Both communities today are predominantly Ukrainian and have ceased to be the once thriving business centres they were shortly after the turn of the century. The long rows of piled cord-wood are no longer seen near the railway siding or behind the village stores awaiting shipment by freight to Winnipeg and the prairies.

Meleb School District was formed on February 20, 1913.<sup>66</sup> A one-room school was first constructed, but as the settlement grew, a second room had to be added to the original structure in 1920. Mr. William Chimchak and his wife taught at Meleb for almost fifteen years until about 1942. His wife taught Grades One to Four in one classroom while he took charge of Grades Five to Ten in the other. In 1942, the school again reverted to the use of only one room. Meleb School has always had a teacherage.<sup>67</sup>

During the 1940's, Mr. Colin Doroschuk, the teacher, devoted much time to 4-H Club activities. The students' displays and sportsmanship at the rallies held in either Teulon or Arborg were outstanding and always won recognition. The youth of the district were also organized into athletic clubs during the summer, and dramatic clubs for winter enjoyment. The young men's softball team formed part of a league with Camp Morton, Arborg, Riverton, Gimli, and Dniester during the 1930's.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Virginia Zubyk. She was in charge of a class of twenty-six pupils.

Frazerwood S. D. 1666. Frazerwood village was first named Kreuzberg. The earliest settlers were from Eastern Europe and chiefly of German descent. When the School District was formed on February 20,

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<sup>66</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>67</sup>Supplied by Miss V. Zubyk in an interview February 8, 1965.

1913,<sup>68</sup> it was under the control of an Official Trustee, Mr. S. Wood. During World War 1, while anti-German feelings were running high, the name of the settlement was changed to Frazerwood in honour of Mr. Wood and his wife whose maiden name had been Miss Frazer.

The first school erected was a one-room frame structure.<sup>69</sup> From the beginning, the thriving communigh had a high student enrolment. Two of the first teachers were Mr. Hlady, who remained about three years, and Mr. Basirbovich. The classes were instructed, partly in Ukrainian and partly in English, by teachers who had graduated from the Ruthenian Training School on Minto Street in Winnipeg. This teacher training institution was finally closed in 1916 when the Manitoba Legislature abolished the use of Ukrainian and other foreign languages in the schools of the province.<sup>70</sup> After 1916, the school registers at the Frazerwood School reveal a heavy teacher turnover which include many Anglo-Saxon names as the English speaking teachers tried to adapt to the language and cultural barriers in the district.

In the late 1920's, a second one-room school was erected and a teacherage was built. Both schools continued in use until 1954, when another room was added to the second school thereby making available a high school classroom in addition to the two elementary classrooms. In 1962, the old schools were demolished and a fully-modern two-room

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<sup>68</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education.

<sup>69</sup> Supplied by Mr. Peter Capar in an interview February 4, 1965.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Yuzyk, Ukrainians in Manitoba. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953. p.

frame building was erected. This school now serves as an elementary school while the high school students are transported to the Gimli Composite High School.

The teachers for the 1964-65 school year were Mr. Peter Capar, with a class of thirty pupils, and Mrs. Wm. Chimchak in charge of a class of thirty-five. The teacherage is not in use.

There was much work done in connection with 4-H Club activities during the 1940's.

A memorable occasion for the Frazerwood community was the visit of Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada, on September 1, 1936. In his message, delivered to the people of the district, he made this often repeated remark: "You will all be better Canadians for being also good Ukrainians."<sup>71</sup>

Vestri S. D. 1669. Vestri School District is adjacent to the Vidir School District in the Municipality of Bifrost. The School District was formed on March 8, 1913.<sup>72</sup> The first school which was erected the same year, had an enrolment of eighteen. It was located on the N.E. 1/2 of Section 1, Township 23, Range 1, E.

The present fully-modern one-room elementary school building was erected in 1940. The original school site was abandoned in preference of the more centrally located present structure. The present school is located in Section 6, Township 23, Range 2, E.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>John Murray Gibbon, Canadian Mosaic. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1938. p. 307.

<sup>72</sup>School District Formation Records, Vol. 111, Dept. of Education.

<sup>73</sup>Personal communication from Mr. Donald Sumka, December 18, 1964.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Donald Sumka. His class had an enrolment of eleven.

Fyrer S. D. 1676. Fyrer School is located in the Local Government District of Armstrong and Bifrost Municipality. The residents are predominantly Greek Catholic and of Ukrainian origin. The name, "Fyrer", is of Spanish origin and probably refers to Juan de Ferreras, the historian who supposedly fought for freedom in education.<sup>74</sup>

The Fyrer School District was established on April 30, 1913.<sup>75</sup> The first school was built in 1914 and began classes with an enrolment of forty-four. The school was located on Section 31, Township 21, Range 3, E.

The first student from Fyrer School to attend high school at Teulon was J. F. Palamarchuk, in 1920. His father, Fred, was the first district chairman of the school board. Through his efforts, the school district was organized and maintained by a locally elected Board of Trustees.

The school was closed in 1959, and the children are now transported by bus to Arborg.

Lowland S. D. 1684. Lowland School District was formed on June 14, 1913.<sup>76</sup> The first school was built in 1913, and began operating

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<sup>74</sup> Personal communication from Mr. J. F. Palamarchuk, January 12, 1965.

<sup>75</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>76</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

with an enrolment of thirteen pupils.

The present Lowland School is located on Section 2, Township 24, Range 1, E. The teacher in this one-room elementary school for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Dolores Bardarson. She was in charge of a class of thirty pupils.

The majority of the settlers in the district are of Icelandic descent.<sup>77</sup>

The Secretary-Treasurer of Lowland School District is Mr. Alfred Thomson. He has served on the Board for many years.

Woodglen S. D. 1722. The Woodglen School District was formed on February 14, 1914.<sup>78</sup> While there is evidence that a school was conducted by the early Icelandic settlers in this region in 1896,<sup>79</sup> there is scant information about the project.

Since 1949, the region has been settled by Mennonites from the Steinbach-Morris area. The very fertile land in this low-lying area along the lakeshore was made accessible through a large scale government drainage program carried out about ten years ago.

Two one-room elementary schools have been erected in the school district,--Woodglen School No. 1., and Woodglen School No. 2. Woodglen School No. 1 was built in 1950. It is located on Section 14, Township

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<sup>77</sup>Supplied by Dolores Bardarson in an interview February 13, 1965.

<sup>78</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>79</sup>Supplied by Miss Alma Grant in an interview February 8, 1965.



24, Range 4, E. The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Walter Reimer. He was in charge of a class of twenty-three pupils in Grades One to Eight. Woodglen School No. 2., was built in 1959. This modern one-room structure is located about six miles north of Riverton. There is a comfortable three-room teacherage on the premises. Some of the former teachers at this school are: Mr. W. S. Buck, who remained three years; Mr. Joseph Platt; and Victor Hildebrand. The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Alma Grant. She had a class of sixteen pupils.

Tarno S. D. 1741. Tarno School is named after Tarnow, a village in the Ukraine from which many of the early settlers emigrated.

Tarno School District was formed on March 3, 1914.<sup>80</sup> The one-room elementary school constructed the same year was located on Section 29, Township 23, Range 3, E. It is in the Municipality of Bifrost.

Commencing in 1934, high school classes were conducted at Tarno School. Since the formation of the Evergreen School Division, the high school students have been transported to Riverton Collegiate.

Mrs. Carol Myrowich was the teacher for the 1964-65 school year. She had a class of thirteen pupils.<sup>81</sup>

Rosenburg S. D. 1773. Rosenburg School District, as the name

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<sup>80</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>81</sup>Personal communication from Mrs. Carol Myrowich, December 17, 1964.

implies, was originally a German settlement. Most of the first settlers have moved. Of those present now, six are of Ukrainian origin; two are Dutch Mennonite; and one family is of German origin.

Rosenburg School District was formed on February 3, 1915.<sup>82</sup> It is located in the Government District of Fisher. The first school house was built in 1917 on Section 24, Township 24, Range 2, E. The first class had an enrolment of twenty-two.

The eleven school children present in the school district have not warranted the expense of maintaining a school. During the 1964-65 school year the school has remained closed and the children attend nearby schools.

The Secretary-Treasurer for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Minnie Chomokovski.<sup>83</sup>

Hayek S. D. 1788. The Hayek School District was formed on April 29, 1915.<sup>84</sup> The first settlers were of Icelandic origin, however, there are now more families of Ukrainian descent farming in the district.

The original school, built in 1915, was replaced in 1955 with a modern one-room school with a two-room teacherage attached. This school is located about seven miles north of Arborg.

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<sup>82</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>83</sup>Personal communication from Mrs. Minnie Chomokovski, December 4, 1964.

<sup>84</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

Some of the teachers who have served in this district are:

Mrs. Lisowack, who is a teacher at Hodgson; Mrs. Bidochka; and Mrs. Walter Wawruck, the wife of the present Secretary-Treasurer of the District.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Anne Stefansson, who taught there for the past four years. She was in charge of a class of twenty-three pupils.<sup>85</sup>

Okno S. D. 1789. The Okno School District was formed on April 29, 1915.<sup>86</sup> The school is located in a predominantly Ukrainian settlement about three miles north of Hayek School.

The first school built was destroyed by fire in 1930. In that year, Nick Fedors, Adam Shrupka, and Peter Barylski, were the Trustees of the school district. Mr. Kost Lisowick was the Secretary-Treasurer. Miss Olga Podolick the teacher, had a class of forty-five pupils.<sup>87</sup>

Other teachers in this school district have been: Florence Moffat, Peter Maydan, Miss Sayek, Michael Semenchuk, Beverly Ratai, Edward Poworoznick, and Andrew Mynareck.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Julia Bidochka. She was in charge of a class of seventeen pupils.

Mr. Steve Deneka was the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District for the 1964-65 school year.

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<sup>85</sup> Supplied by Mr. Walter Wawruck in an interview February 13, 1965.

<sup>86</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>87</sup> Supplied by Mrs. Julia Bidochka in an interview February 13, 1965.

Sambor S. D. 1791. Sambor School District was formed on April 27, 1915.<sup>88</sup> The first one-room elementary school built that year was destroyed by fire in 1930. None of the school registers were saved. There is a two-room teacherage.

The first teacher in the district was Mr. Miller. He remained for ten years. Other well-known teachers were: Mr. Neufeld; Sofie Freedman; Mr. Nickorchuk; who later taught at Bismarck School and was a sports enthusiast; and Mr. Lysecki.

The second school erected in 1930, was closed in 1959 when the Evergreen School Division was formed. Thereafter, the school children were transported to Arborg.<sup>89</sup>

Mr. William Woychuk has been the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District for the 1964-65 school year. He has held office for a number of years.

Prout S. D. 1821. Prout School is located four and a half miles west of Winnipeg Beach in a predominantly Ukrainian settlement.

The School District was formed on March 27, 1916.<sup>90</sup> For a number of years a two-room elementary school was required to handle the heavy enrolment. For the past few years, however, only one room has been in use. There is a modern four-room teacherage on the premises.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>89</sup>Supplied by Mr. William Woychuk in an interview February 10, 1965.

<sup>90</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>91</sup>Personal communication from Mrs. Lasaski, December 8, 1964.

In the past, students have been taught at Prout School in Grades Nine and Ten by correspondence.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Lasaski.

Shorncliffe S. D. 1831. The Shorncliffe School District was formed on June 5, 1916.<sup>92</sup> Two schools have been erected in the district. The first school and its records were destroyed by fire. The present one-room elementary school lacks plumbing and is heated with a wood furnace. There is a two-room teacherage on the schoolgrounds.

Some of the former teachers in the district have been: Mr. Harry Olenick; James Maysk, who remained two years; Mrs. Pudlo; and Mrs. Lutka.<sup>93</sup>

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Irene Kwasiuk. She was in charge of a class of twenty-three pupils.

Three Sisters S. D. 1842. Three Sisters School District was formed on September 1, 1916.<sup>94</sup> The older residents in the district confirm the fact that the school district received its name from three sisters who were born as triplets.

The story relates that as the first schoolhouse, the former Fish Lake School building that had been situated on the Ridge of the

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<sup>92</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>93</sup>Supplied by Mr. Steve Petrachek in an interview February 11, 1965.

<sup>94</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

road towards Chatfield, was being moved into its present location on Mr. Michael Marchak's farm, the husband excitedly announced to the movers that his wife had just given birth to triplets: Irene, Jeanette, and Lorraine. Two are still living; the third, Lorraine, died of whooping cough at the age of two months.<sup>95</sup>

The first teacher, Mrs. Crow, had a class enrolment of twenty-five pupils. She was succeeded the following year by Wilma Gibson, who came from Riverton. Other teachers in the district have been: Joe Gula, Margaret Zuk, Tony Chikowski, Edward Firman, Edward Hryciw and William Stefaniuk.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mrs. Emil Skrabic. She was in charge of a class of fourteen pupils.

Mr. Fred Ulrick, the present Secretary-Treasurer, has held the position for a number of years.

Hastings S. D. 1853. Hastings School District was formed on February 5, 1917.<sup>96</sup> The school is situated about one mile west of the village of Silver.

The original schoolhouse and all the records were destroyed by fire in 1955. A modern one-room frame structure was erected to replace the old school. There is a small teacherage.

Hastings School has always had a rapid turnover of teachers.

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<sup>95</sup>Supplied by Mrs. H. R. Klowak in an interview February 9, 1965.

<sup>96</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

Most of the teachers employed have remained for only one year. The class enrolment has for many years been fairly constant at about forty-five; but, during the last decade, it has dwindled steadily to its present low of eleven.<sup>97</sup>

Some of the former teachers have been: Mrs. Pawluk, Mr. Peter Pidborchynski, and Mr. P. Bock who was the teacher for the 1963-64 school year.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Wilfred Pitz. He was in charge of a class of eleven pupils.

Devonshire S. D. 1865. Devonshire School District was formed on March 24, 1917.<sup>98</sup> The one-room school and teacherage which were constructed the same year, are located about four miles west of the village of Frazerwood. Devonshire School has always been under the administrative control of an Official Trustee.

This school district was settled by Eastern Europeans. The school was the centre of social activities. Dances and concerts were frequently held there, and the annual school picnic attracted most of the residents for a day of outing and relaxation.

Most of the early school registers have been lost. The older The older residents can recall the extremely heavy school enrolments once common in this school. Despite the handicaps of pioneer life and

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<sup>97</sup>Supplied by Mr. Michael Osioway in an interview February 11, 1965.

<sup>98</sup>Supplied by Mrs. H. R. Klowak in an interview February 9, 1965.

large classes, most of the children were able to acquire a Grade Ten standing through correspondence courses.<sup>99</sup>

Among the many teachers who have served in this district are: Mrs. S. Orvis, Joe Gula, Mrs. Hokanson, and Adolph Marchak.

The teacher for the year 1964-65 school year was Mrs. H. R. Klowak. She has taught three and a half years in the district and resides in the four-room teacherage located on the school grounds. She was in charge of a class of fourteen pupils.

Cavendish S. D. 1866. Cavendish School District was formed on March 26, 1917.<sup>100</sup> It is in the Local Government District of Armstrong. The one-room school and teacherage was constructed the same year by Mr. Michael Gottfried.

Two teachers were employed during the first year--one for each term. Miss Elizabeth W. Ehman taught during the first term, and Miss Alice Higgenbothame, the second term. The original school building and teacherage are still in use. They are located on the S. W. 1/4 of Section 25, Township 19, Range 1, E.

While the school was planned as an elementary school, quite frequently the teachers were required to assist students who were taking high school by correspondence. The nearest high school was at Teulon. During the Depression years the cost of board and lodging for

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<sup>99</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

<sup>100</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.



those students attending from a distance, was beyond their means. As a result, the local school teacher was requested to handle the extra grades.

In 1941, the school was awarded a Trophy for annual inter-school competition in physical training. The trophy was awarded by the Strathcona Trust and was presented to the teacher, Mr. J. Meuller.<sup>101</sup>

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Donald Hrehoruk. He had a class of fifteen pupils.

Adam S. D. 2012. Adam School District was formed on October 20, 1919.<sup>102</sup> The one-room elementary school is located on Section 32, Township 21, Range 1, E. The majority of the people in the district are of Ukrainian origin, and Greek Catholic.

The first school was built in 1920. The first class had an enrolment of fifty-two, which indicates that, in the beginning, the district was a thriving settlement.<sup>103</sup>

The original school building is still in use.

Mr. C. E. Buck was the teacher during the 1964-65 school year. He had a class of thirteen pupils.

Morweena S. D. 2020. Morweena School District was formed on

<sup>101</sup>Supplied by Mr. Donald Hryhoruk in an interview February 10, 1965.

<sup>102</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>103</sup>Personal communication from Mr. C. E. Buck, December 14, 1964.

January 6, 1920.<sup>104</sup> The original school constructed in that year is still in use. It is located about seven miles west and seven miles north of the village of Arborg.

The first settlers in the district were mainly of Ukrainian origin. For the past ten years, however, a number of Mennonite families have moved in from Mexico, and the Morris-Steinbach area. These people have turned the region into a prosperous agricultural community. Most of the children now attending Morweena School are from Mennonite homes.

The earliest school registers available are stored in the attic of the old school. They reveal that in 1921, two teachers were employed--one for each term. They were Mr. Clarence Miller, and Mr. H. H. Hooper. The twenty-five pupils must have occupied the rows of old double seats which are still in use. The members of the School Board were: Ira Stratton, the Official Trustee; Mr. Wozeny; H. D. Cummings, the local School Inspector; and Mr. Tomlinson, the Secretary-Treasurer.

Most of the early teachers remained in the district for only one year. Some of these teachers were: John H. Hykawy, Rose Silberforb, Sophie Donan, J. G. Wawrykow, Dagmar Johanesson, G. R. Salten, Pearl Block, Ivan Pachulak, George M. Colten, John Kolinski, Christine Walzer, Jacob Fehr, Mike Romaniuk, Lena Genyk, Barbara Swaluk, and Theresa Petrachek. The teacher employed for the 1964-65 school year, Mr. Donald Thiessen, has served the district for four years.

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<sup>104</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

Steve Shactay is the Secretary-Treasurer for the 1964-65 school year. He has held office for almost ten years. The Chairman of the board is Mr. Abe Reimer. A third board member elected in 1965 is Mr. Joseph Chyzyy.

In addition to the regular classwork, Mr. D. Theissen instructs the children in woodworking. He has constructed a work bench at the back of the classroom on which the boys work while Mrs. Theissen instructs the girls in sewing. These are school projects in no way associated with 4-H Club Activities.<sup>105</sup>

Washow Bay S. D. 2060. This School District lies north of the Mennville School District. The school which is no longer in use is located on the N. W. 1/4 of Section 8, Township 25, Range 4, E.

The School District is under the control of an Official Trustee of the Department of Education.<sup>106</sup>

Cumming S. D. 2076. The Cumming School District was formed on April 7, 1921.<sup>107</sup> The one-room elementary school and teacherage erected in that year are located about two miles west of the village of Meleb.

The first teacher was Miss Stadnuck. Some of the others with longer tenure are: Miss Malenchak; Mr. McKay; Mrs. Doroschuk, who remained eight years while her husband taught at Meleb; Miss Winnie Krushanko (Mrs. Andrusiak); and John Keryluk, who is at present teaching

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<sup>105</sup>Supplied by Mr. Donald Thiessen in an interview February 13, 1965.

<sup>106</sup>Personal communication from Mr. J. A. Cameron, Official Trustee, Department of Education, January, 1965.

<sup>107</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

at the Gimli Composite High School. The last teacher employed was Mr. Joseph Shankowski.

During the early years, the pupil enrolment frequently reached eighty. When the school was eventually closed due to insufficient attendance in 1960, it had an enrolment of five. The pupils are transported to the school at Meleb. A transportation grant is received from the Department of Education.

Mr. Tony Rosolowich was the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District from 1947 to 1960.<sup>108</sup>

Homer S. D. 2078. Homer School District was formed on July 3, 1921.<sup>109</sup> The one-room elementary school erected that year has recently been remodelled and equipped with oil heat and wired for electricity. The school is located near the northern perimeter of the Evergreen School Division.

Homer School had an enrolment of twenty-two pupils when the school was first opened. Many permit teachers have been employed in the past. When Mrs. K. S. Benedictson came to teach in the district, a teacherage was purchased and moved onto the school grounds. The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Ruth Folk. She was in charge of a class of eleven pupils.

Mrs. William Weik is the Secretary Treasurer of the school

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<sup>108</sup>Supplied by Mr. Tony Rosolowich in an interview February 10, 1965.

<sup>109</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, January 27, 1965.

district.<sup>110</sup>

Island S. D. 2105. Island School District was formed on June 5, 1923.<sup>111</sup> The school district was settled as the pioneers moved westward from Laufas School District in search of new land. The first settlers were of Icelandic origin.

The school has operated as a one-room elementary school with Grades One to Eight until 1964 when the school districts of Laufas and Island combined to effect major economies in the operation of the schools. Effective in September 1964. Island School had one teacher in charge of Grades One to Four, while Laufas School handled the remaining students in Grades Five to Eight.

Miss Emily Orzeck was the teacher during the 1963-64 school year. Miss Lupyrypa was the teacher for the 1964-65 school year.<sup>112</sup>

New Valley S. D. 2106. New Valley School is located in the unorganized Local Government District of Fisher. The School District was formed on June 5, 1923.<sup>113</sup>

The first one-room elementary school was erected in 1923 on Section 33, Township 22, Range 1, E. The enrolment for the first year was forty-five.

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<sup>110</sup>Supplied by Mr. William Weik in an interview February 11, 1965.

<sup>111</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>112</sup>Supplied by Miss Lupyrypa in an interview February 11, 1965.

<sup>113</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Irene Eva Dern. She was in charge of a class of sixteen.

The original school building is still in use.

The majority of the ratepayers in the district are of Ukrainian origin.<sup>114</sup>

Progress S. D. 2115. Progress School District was formed on October 6, 1924.<sup>115</sup> The first school was opened in January, 1925. It was built on the corner of Mr. F. Polka's farm. The two acres were purchased for \$1.00 since a donation could not be legally made. The majority of the settlers in the district are of Ukrainian origin although in recent years a few Mennonite families have acquired farms.

The first teacher was Mr. G. Lee. He had a class of twenty pupils all enrolled in Grade One. Only two of the children were able to speak English--one was a Ukrainian; the other an Icelander. These two, translated to the others. The second teacher was Miss L. Fox. The members of the first School Board were: Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Steve Speeder; Chairman, Mr. Fred Polka; and Trustee, Mr. Pete Stasiuk.

The first school and all the records was destroyed by fire on Friday, October 13, 1939. It was replaced with a new one-room school complete with most modern conveniences. Miss Mary Gregor continued to teach throughout the changeover. The nine pupils attended classes

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<sup>114</sup> Supplied by Miss Irene E. Dern in an interview February 12, 1965.

<sup>115</sup> Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

in the teacherage until the warmer spring weather made it possible to move the tables and chairs under a lean-to by the teacherage.<sup>116</sup>

Mr. Andrew Sutyla has been the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District for the past fifteen years.

The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Peter Friessen. The school has an enrolment of nine pupils.

Finns S. D. 2225. Finns School District was formed on September 2, 1930.<sup>117</sup> The settlers originally formed part of the Jaroslaw community. The majority of the early settlers were from Eastern Europe of Polish or Ukrainian descent.

The one-room elementary school constructed in 1930 is located on Highway No. 8., one mile west of the village of Finns. The original building is still in use. A two-room teacherage was constructed in 1941.

The Secretary-Treasurer for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Joseph Orzeck. He also served in the same capacity for the Jaroslaw School District. He has served both districts for over twenty years. His brother, Philip, has also been a Secretary-Treasurer of the District for a number of years.<sup>118</sup>

Outstanding among the many teachers who have served in this school are: Mrs. Thorunn Eyjolfson; Mrs. Marteinsson; Miss Svanbergson;

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<sup>116</sup>Supplied by Miss Rose Polka in an interview June 12, 1965.

<sup>117</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>118</sup>Supplied by Mr. Philip Orzeck in an interview January 9, 1965.

and Mr. Michael Moroz who taught there for six years, and is now the Supervising Principal of the Gimli Public Schools.

Two teachers have been employed during the 1964-65 school year-- one for each term. Mrs. Dufault taught during the first term, and Mrs. Clark, the second term.

During the 1940's there had been much 4-H Club activity in this school district.

Lilac S. D. 2282. Lilac School District was formed on May 18, 1937.<sup>119</sup> The one-room school and teacherage are located two miles west of Gimli near the entrance to the R. C. A. F. Station.

Lilac School District was formed as the result of a petition circulated amongst the ratepayers of the Dniester School District to withdraw and erect a school more suited to the needs of an expanding community.

When the new school opened in 1937, it had an enrolment of thirty-eight pupils. Mr. P. J. Humeniuk was the first teacher. He was succeeded by Mr. Alexander Ewanchuk, who remained two years. Mr. E. D. Persowage, and Mr. Michael Shewaga each remained for one year. Then in 1943, Mr. Gregory Marko, who is well known in this district for his fine work in Arts and Crafts, came to teach and remained for seven years. He was followed in order by Mr. A. J. Nicky, John Melnyk, Mrs. H. Pashnitski, Miss M. L. Klym, Mrs. Ingibjorg Neilson, and Mr.

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<sup>119</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.



Peter Wesley, who has been there since 1957.<sup>120</sup>

Mr. Peter Wesley was in charge of a class of twenty pupils during the 1964-65 school year.

Mennville S. D. 2341. Mennville School District was formed on June 13, 1952.<sup>121</sup> It is located north of Riverton in a Mennonite settlement.

Mennville School is the second school built by the Mennonite settlers in the Washow Bay district. The first school was organized at a meeting held in the home of Mr. Aaron D. Friesen. Inspector J. H. Menzies was present. At the meeting, it was decided that the first class should be housed in a 14 ft. by 16 ft. cabin on the Friesen farm. Miss Helen Reimer was engaged as the first teacher. Classes began in 1952 with thirteen pupils present. Three wooden tables, now used in the woodwork classroom, served as the first desks. This school was in operation for two and a half months until the construction of the new school was completed. The new classroom remained quite bare for the first year with nine double desks, the teacher's desk, and a pile of benches stacked on the side of the room for church service on Sunday.

The teachers in Mennville School to the present, have been: Miss Helen Reimer, who remained one year; Mr. George Sawatzki (1953-54),

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<sup>120</sup>Supplied by Mr. Peter Wesley in an interview February 17, 1965.

<sup>121</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

who had a class of twenty-six pupils; Mr. Henry Freisen (1954-55); Miss Eva Fest (1955-56); Miss Mary Theissen (1956-57); and Mr. Elmer Groening (1957-65).

In 1959, another room was added to the school. Mr. E. Groening was promoted to Principal and teacher of Grades Five to Eight. Miss Nettie Brandt was engaged to teach Grades One to Four. Miss Brandt remained for two years and was replaced by Miss Elma Brandt, who also remained for two years. The next teacher was Mrs. Giesbrecht. The teacher for the 1964-65 school year was Miss Helen Barkman.<sup>122</sup>

In 1963, a high school classroom was prepared in the basement of the school for Grades Nine and Ten. Mr. John Klassen became the teacher. During the 1964-65 school year he had an enrolment of twelve students.

Grund S. D. 2343. Grund School District is located on the northern tip of Big Island in the unorganized Local Government District of Fisher. Gull Harbour is the main community centre.

A school has been operated at Gull Harbour in the early days of settlement, however, it was maintained for only a few years and the school at Hecla received its pupils.

Grund School District was formed on January 2, 1953.<sup>123</sup> A school building was never constructed although a section was set aside for one. The school children attend at Hecla.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Personal communication from Mr. Elmer Groening, January 19, 1965.

<sup>123</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

<sup>124</sup>Personal communication from Mr. G. Bardarson, December 12, 1964.

CHAPTER VI  
SPECIAL SCHOOLS

This chapter will deal with private and parochial schools, public schools conducted by members of Religious Orders, and public schools operated by the Department of National Defence.

In 1957, the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education was established to inquire into educational problems. In its report, presented in 1959, it unanimously recommended that some assistance be granted to private and parochial schools. This recommendation brought focus to bear on a school problem that has plagued Manitoba politics since 1890.

Both the Canadian and British traditions advocate the recognition and public support of minority rights in the field of education. Most of the provinces of the Dominion recognize the rights of minorities, be they Protestant or Catholic, by continuing the system of education that existed in each province at the time of union with the Dominion. In this respect, Manitoba has been "odd man out", and to rectify the situation, the Premier of Manitoba introduced a "Shared Services" plan to the legislature on March 16, 1965. This plan, which was subsequently passed, approved the sharing of such services as free text books, bus transportation, and certain classroom facilities which are now received by the students attending the public schools.

The Laurier-Greenway Compromise of 1897, provided that members of religious orders might teach in the public schools where this was

desired by a majority of the residents in a school district. Use of this provision has been made in various schools throughout the Division and particularly in the Berlo, and King Edward school districts.

In recent years, education has ceased to remain the sole responsibility of each province. The Dominion government has been accepting an increasingly greater share of the financial responsibility. While much of the Federal effort had been previously confined to national defence, since the end of World War II, the training and education of veterans has received much attention and support. The Canadian Vocational Training Plan, the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Plan, and the provision of university education for the veterans of World War II, are only a few of the Federal government's educational undertakings within the province.

#### I. PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

In 1890, the Province of Manitoba withdrew all financial support from private and parochial schools and adopted an American-type, common, non-sectarian school system. Since then, Anglicans, Catholics, and in varying degrees, a number of Protestant groups, have felt that they were being penalized for adhering to the theocratic view that religion should permeate education, since, they were required to pay school taxes in support of the public school system in addition to contributing towards the schools of their choice. At the present time, this lack of financial support, coupled with an increase in educational costs, threatens the very existence of those private and parochial schools now in operation.

The Sisters of St. Benedict. In 1913, the community of the Sisters of St. Benedict was incorporated by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature.<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Sisters purchased a three hundred acre tract of land on the outskirts of the village of Arborg. There, in 1915, they constructed a two-storey frame building in which to house the seventy-five orphans placed under their care. The building was not equipped with running water or electricity. The land, which the Orphanage operated as a farm, supplemented the few sources of revenue.

The children, left as orphans or victims of broken homes, were granted a haven of loving care through the self-sacrifice of the Sisters. Often there were times of desperate need when the only food available was what the Sisters were able to bring home from the hunt. Their resources were always taxed to the limit and the Orphanage seldom lacked a waiting list. Through the practice of extreme thrift, their venture was able to survive the beginning years.

The children received an elementary education that included Music, and Catechism. All of the lessons were conducted in a Christian atmosphere of piety and respect.

In 1923, the Motherhouse in Winnipeg was reduced to a mission, and the establishment at Arborg was chosen for the new Orphanage and Convent.<sup>2</sup> To accommodate the necessary increase in personnel, a

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<sup>1</sup>Supplied by the Sisters of St. Benedict in an interview January 10, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Edward M. Hubicz, Polish Churches in Manitoba. London: Veritas Foundation Publication Centre, 1960. p. 47.

three-storey wing, complete with electrical appliances was added to the existing structure. When the late Archbishop Alfred A. Sinnott arrived on January 10, 1924, to bless the new Motherhouse, there were fifty-nine Sisters, twelve Novices, twelve Postulants, and about eighty orphans included in the religious community.

The following year, the Sisters took upon themselves the task of providing high school instruction, not only for the orphans under their care, but, also for non-resident students. This needed service enabled deserving students, whose parents could not afford the cost of sending their children to the nearest boarding school at Teulon, to move on to higher education after receiving their senior matriculation. Non-resident students were accommodated as the varying number of orphans allowed for their admittance. The quality of the instruction imparted to the students was high, and the Sisters seldom lacked a waiting list. Many non-Catholic students were admitted. The practice of admitting non-resident students began in 1928 and continued until 1961 when the Sisters moved to their present location at Middlechurch.

In addition to conducting classes at the Orphanage, the Sisters of St. Benedict were frequently called upon to assist the local school boards. From their Motherhouse in Arborg, they travelled, often in inclement weather and hazardous road conditions, to hold classes at Ledwyn School, and Bjarmi School, near Arborg; Park School, west of Meleb; and Felzendorf South School, west of Gimli. They were always willing and prepared to provide Sunday School instruction whenever requested by the surrounding parishes. The R.C.A.F. dependents'

at Aspen Park; and the children at Gimli, Camp Morton, and other villages in the district, all benefitted from the catechism lessons received from the Sisters at Arborg. For many years, the catechism lessons were conducted by mail. Countless hours were spent on this phase of their activities with little or no material gain. Today, the work of the Benedictine Sisters is handicapped, as is the work of many other religious communities, by the general lack of vocation to the religious life.

One of the most successful graduates from the Arborg Convent and Orphanage was John H. L. Shebeski B.S.A., M.Sc., Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba.

Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate. The Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate established a home for the aged at Komarno in 1936.<sup>3</sup> This Old Folks Home was an extension of the one they were operating in Winnipeg on Aberdeen Avenue.

While the care of the home was their primary concern, their presence in the settlement was welcomed in many other ways. During the twenty-five years the Home was in operation, the Sisters conducted catechism lessons in the schools within and adjacent to Komarno. They also conducted choir practice for the young people and held regular classes in Ukrainian.

The Sisters moved to their present location in Winnipeg when the

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<sup>3</sup>Supplied by Sister Marion, in an interview November 8, 1964.

Old Folks Home ceased operating on May 6, 1961.

## II. PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONDUCTED BY RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Monsignor Morton. The village of Camp Morton in which the local headquarters of the Sisters of Service is situated, derived its name from Monsignor Morton, the former rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg. Prior to his ordination, Monsignor Morton had been a teacher in a boy's school in England where he came in contact with a student who was later to become Britain's wartime leader, Sir Winston Churchill. Monsignor Morton was considered to be an authority in Astronomy and was frequently called to lecture at the University of Manitoba. It was however, his interest in the Boy Scout movement in Winnipeg that led him in his later years to conceive the idea of developing a Scout camp one mile north of the Lakeside Fresh Air Camp on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

The property was purchased from Mr. J. Maier in 1920, and the existing farm buildings were renovated to provide a temporary dining hall and dormitory. As the campers began to make their appearance in ever increasing numbers, the Canadian Pacific Railway erected a station and named it Camp Morton.

In 1923, the project gained impetus when Archbishop Alfred A. Sinnott acquired control of a major portion of the property and, backed by funds supplied by the archdiocese, proceeded to develop the camp. Modern buildings, complete with electric lights and running water, were constructed. The gardener, Mr. Henry W. Sumpter, assisted by a crew of



about twenty labourers, worked throughout the summer caring for the grounds. Around the buildings spread park-like grounds interspersed with numerous beds of flowers. Carefully tended pathways wound through the woods, occasionally affording a glimpse of a marble statue gleaming through the foliage. In a secluded area would be a vine-covered reading room, or a lily pond complete with playing fountains and ornamental shrubbery. Deep within the heavily wooded area was the Druid's Circle, a large archway of hand-hewn timbers constructed over a circular pathway. At its centre was a huge oak. The entire archway was thickly overgrown with vines to provide shade and rest for contemplation and enjoyment. Facilities for baseball, tennis, swimming, and lawn bowling were available for the sports enthusiasts.

Close to the lakeshore and a half mile from the main roadway leading to the camp, Monsignor Morton built a castle which he named Champion Tower. Here he came to live in quiet and seclusion during the active years of his life, and remained in retirement until his death.

King Edward School District No. 1291. King Edward School District was established on June 3, 1904.<sup>4</sup> The first school constructed at Haas (now Camp Morton) was a log structure located on the height of land about two miles west of the lakeshore. The first teacher was Mr. A. E. Kristjanson. This school building served until 1915 when

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<sup>4</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

the ratepayers decided to erect two schools in the district. King Edward No. 2 was the first to be erected. It was situated three miles west of the lakeshore. Classes began in the Fall of 1915 with Mr. A. B. Romanow, as teacher. Mr. Frank Olson, a teacher with many years of service in the district, also taught there. The last lay teacher was Esther J. Sullivan. King Edward No. 1. school was erected in 1916. It was situated about a mile west of the lakeshore. The first teacher was Miss J. Inga Tergesen, the daughter of Mr. H. P. Tergesen who was one of the first merchants in Gimli. The last lay teacher was Miss Laura H. Solmundson (now Mrs. J. Tergesen).

The Sisters of Service. The Sisters of Service arrived at Camp Morton in 1924 to take charge of the schools in the King Edward School District. The first Sister to teach at King Edward No. 1. school was Sister Catherine Donnelly. She took charge of a class of twenty-five pupils. Sister Margaret Guest was assigned the King Edward No. 2. school. She was in charge of a class of thirty-six pupils.

Until the Christmas of 1924, the Sisters lived at the Camp in Mr. J. Maier's old farmhouse. In the meantime, a cottage was being winterized and made ready for occupancy at their present location. The Sisters moved into permanent quarters immediately after the New Year in 1925.<sup>5</sup>

To provide for transportation to and from the schools the Sisters

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<sup>5</sup>Personal communication from Sister L. Renaud, November 14, 1964.

secured and cared for three horses. A stable was constructed behind their residence; and Sister Catherine Donnelly, who loved horses, cared for the animals. During the first few years, the Sisters drove daily to the schools. The horse was stabled at one of the neighbouring farms during the day. Later, a stable was built at the No. 2. school. During the months of severe winter weather, the Sisters would secure board and room at one of the neighbouring farm homes.

In 1939, the Sisters began teaching at Bismarck School in Berlo. This school was situated about six miles from the Motherhouse at Camp Morton. The teacherage at the Bismarck School became the headquarters for the two Sisters in charge of Bismarck School and King Edward No. 2. School. A caboose, heated with a wood stove was used for transportation during the winter months

For about fifteen years after the arrival of the Sisters, most of the roads in the district were unimproved. During the wet seasons, the wagon or buggy wheels became so weighted with the local sticky blue gumbo soil that they would cut ruts as deep as the axles and make travelling almost impossible. A new car, donated to the Sisters in 1929, was used sparingly and only when weather permitted during the summer months. The horse and buggy was preferred, for, with it, they were assured of reaching their destination; whereas, they were often incapable of looking after the repairs and frequent adjustments necessary to keep the car in running order.

In addition to caring for the schools, the Sisters provided numerous services for the community. They maintained at their home a

well-stocked lending library. The books were donated by wealthier parishes and no fees were charged for their use. A gift of three organs was received from an Ontario parish. One was donated to the King Edward No. 2. school; the second was placed in the church; and the third was retained by the Sisters to be used for choir practice. Every Sunday at High Mass, the choir sang the Mass of the Angels, and selected hymns were prepared for special occasions. Sunday Schools were provided in the various missions cared for by the resident parish priest. The children were instructed in the catechism and prepared for their first Holy Communion and Confirmation. The Sisters also provided a free nursing service. The first district nurse was Sister Catherine Wymlis. She was succeeded in turn by Sister Brunning and Sister Firman. When the Johnson Memorial Hospital was opened at Gimli, their services were no longer required in that capacity.

During the 1964-65 school year, the Sisters of Service completed forty years of service in the King Edward, and Berlo School Districts. For their unselfish devotion to duty the Catholic communities owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

The following is a list of the teachers who have taught in each of the schools under the Sister's care:<sup>6</sup>

- (1) King Edward No. 1. Sister C. Donnelly; Sister J. Fallon; Sister M. Barton; Sister D. Morrison; Sister R. Hudson; Sister M. Jackson; Sister W. Donnelly; Sister I. Faye; Sister R. Mill; Sister A. Walsh; Sister C. Reinhardt; Sister R. MacLellan; Sister M. Hayes.

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<sup>6</sup>Personal communication from Sister L. Renaud, November 14, 1964.

- (2) King Edward No. 2. Sister M. Guest; Sister G. Walsh; Sister A. Walsh; Sister A. Dwyer; Sister M. Jackson; Sister L. Trautman; Sister A. O'Conner; Sister L. Renaud; Sister C. Camozzi; Sister A. Hartman.
- (3) Berlo School. Sister A. Walsh; Sister A. Caughlin; Sister R. MacLellan; Sister E. Dwyer; Sister A. O'Connor; Sister L. Renaud.

### III. PUBLIC SCHOOLS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

The Federal Government maintains Goulding School for the dependents of servicemen stationed at the Royal Canadian Air Force station at Gimli. Because the school is located on Federal property, it is not included with the provincial schools in the Evergreen School Division. It is, however, subject to inspection by the provincial school inspector; and follows the curriculum approved for the province of Manitoba.

Goulding School District No. 2337. Goulding School District was established on August 11, 1952.<sup>7</sup>

Due to the threat of attack from the Communist bloc of nations during the unsettled conditions following World War II, the wartime air base at Gimli was reopened to train fighter pilots for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Many of the local residents found employment in the extensive reconstruction, expansion, and maintenance of the air-training centre. The upward economic surge induced by the increased government spending was a boon to the district. All branches

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<sup>7</sup>Personal communication from Mr. B. E. Besteck, Assistant Director of Administration, Department of Education, February 2, 1965.

of the economy, with the exception of education, shared in the initial increase of prosperity.

From 1948 to 1952, the Gimli School District had provided educational facilities for the dependents of the Royal Canadian Air Force personnel residing in the town of Gimli. The Department of National Defence, in an effort to help offset the increased burden placed upon the ratepayers of the Town and the surrounding Municipality, paid a per capita grant and assisted in the cost of providing additional classrooms. In addition, the Air-Base co-operated in the use of audio-visual equipment and other educational aids. Transportation for air-force personnel, their dependents, and civilian employees resident in the town, was provided free of charge. Every effort was made to foster and perpetuate harmonious relations between the members of the Royal Canadian Air Force Station and the Town.

In 1952, a major renovation and expansion project was begun on the Station. Permanent married quarters were erected and an eight-room elementary school was constructed. This expansion was precipitated by an acute housing shortage in Gimli. The houses offered for rent were below the standards considered minimum for R.C.A.F. personnel. In addition, the lack of an effective provincial policy to attract and retain suitable teachers, and the reluctance of government at the local level to assume greater responsibility to effect the necessary changes, led to the Department of National Defence entering the fields of housing and education at Gimli.

The new elementary school was named Goulding School in honour of

Wing Commander A. G. Goulding M.C.; D.F.C.<sup>8</sup> His wife, Margaret, was present at the opening ceremonies. The first principal was Mr. Allan Sargeant. The school opened with an enrolment of approximately ninety students. All classes from Kindergarten to Grade Eight were accommodated in four of the eight rooms available. In 1954 Mr. N. Danyluk succeeded Mr. Allan Sargeant as principal. Within two years, increased enrolment necessitated the construction of an additional four-room structure known as Goulding School Annex. In 1956, there were twelve classrooms in operation; and two years later, Mr. N. Danyluk was appointed Supervising Principal.

The Gimli School District has always provided secondary education for the dependents of airforce personnel. Only in 1960 was the Town unprepared to accommodate all of the high school students and a temporary Grade Nine classroom was provided at Goulding School. The R.C.A.F. Station has considered it inadvisable to erect a high school on the Base since there are not a sufficient number of secondary students to warrant the expenditure. It has, however, relieved the Town of the additional expense of maintaining a larger elementary school by transporting daily about a hundred and twenty elementary school children of airforce personnel residing in Gimli to the Goulding School for instruction.

Goulding School is under the administration of an Official Trustee and a Secretary appointed by the Airforce. Since the school

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<sup>8</sup>Supplied by Mr. Allen Sargeant in an interview November 11, 1964.

commenced operating, the following have held the office of Official Trustee: S/L H. Winters; W/C D. Dunning; S/L B. Russel; S/L N. Keene; S/L M. Sherwood; and S/L J. R. Godden.

The teachers have always been employed under contract arrived at by mutual agreement between representatives of the teachers and the Official Trustee. Before coming into effect, all salary agreements are subject to the approval of the local School Inspector, and the Dependents' Education Committee. The teachers are classified as civilian employees, not as Civil Service personnel. Their pension plans are administered by the province.

A Dependents' Education Committee exists to provide a measure of control for airforce personnel over educational matters affecting the welfare of their children. With its headquarters in Ottawa, the Committee also acts as a co-ordinator of educational policy in all Department of National Defence schools.

The establishment in the Gimli area of a school that was under the control of the Dominion Government, produced far-reaching beneficial effects on education in the area. Of major significance was the increase in importance attached to the role of education in the community, and the accompanying increase in prestige for the teacher. The Department of National Defence school became the forerunner of better salaries and working conditions for teachers, and improved teacher-trustee relations. The teachers were assisted in every manner possible to perform their duties. Text books and supplies were ample and provided free of charge to the pupils. The salaries paid to the teachers



were superior to any paid in the district for comparable qualifications and experience. While these factors tended somewhat to promote tensions between the Town and the Air Base because the Town was losing many of its best teachers to the Air Base, it also served to focus attention upon the inadequacies of the educational effort existing in the district. Incentives in the form of salary increases were provided for those teachers who improved their academic qualifications. All teachers at Goulding School were given Officers' Mess privileges, and overseas postings to other service schools were easily obtained. This change in attitude towards teachers and educational matters was stimulated by the growing authority of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, and the growing concern felt over the implications of major advances made by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, especially in the fields of nuclear research. These factors tended to emphasize the importance of the role of the teacher in the community, and to rouse the ratepayers out of the lethargy that had settled on education during the poverty-ridden years of the 1929-39 Depression.

## CHAPTER VII

### OTHER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Despite the existence of the school as the special agency of education, many of the important functions of education are still performed by the community. Schooling is not the whole of education. Many factors that enter into our real education are to be found in our work, play, travel, and religious experiences, to name but a few.

Education is the process by which society maintains and perpetuates itself. It serves two functions--the perpetuating function through which society achieves some measure of stability, and the change-promoting function which is in opposition to the first. Stability is achieved in a society by acquiring the culture of the community, and this is acquired chiefly through active participation in community affairs.

A survey of hours spent in school, conducted by Joseph Hart, indicates that about one-twentieth of our total time is spent in schools.<sup>1</sup> Much more time is spent in the community. As a result, the impact of learning outside the school exceeds that within the school and greatly influences the learning situation.

#### I. COURSES SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Sewing. Girls Sewing classes were organized in Gimli in the

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph K. Hart, A Social Interpretation of Education, Henry Holt and Co., Inc. 1929. pp. 247-254.

early 1920's through the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture.<sup>2</sup> It was an extra-curricular activity held in conjunction with the Shopwork classes for the boys.

First, Second, and Third Year Sewing were taught to Grades Six, Seven, and Eight every Friday afternoon during the school year. The project was first organized by Mrs. E. Melan, the principal of the school. The Gimli Women's Institute donated the first three treadle model Singer sewing machines.

Every year the Sewing classes prepared a display of their best handicrafts for the annual 4-H Club Rally held at one of the larger centres--Teulon, Arborg, or Selkirk. The Gimli girls frequently won awards and one year, two Third Year girls were chosen to represent Manitoba at the Royal Fair at Toronto. Their teacher, Miss J. V. Thordarson, has been a primary teacher and Sewing Instructor for over twenty years at the Gimli Public School.

In 1949, the Gimli Public School was wired for electricity, and the School Board purchased three electric sewing machines. Over sixty girls were then receiving instruction.

Sewing Instructors with long service at the Gimli Public School are: Miss J. V. Thordarson; Miss Lyotunn Thorsteinsson, who devoted much extra time to this phase of her school work from 1948 until her retirement in 1960; and Miss E. Greenberg, a devoted teacher, who taught the sewing classes for about ten years before leaving to join

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<sup>2</sup>The Milestone, (Yearbook of the Gimli Collegiate Institute) 1955-56. pp. 2-4.

the Goulding staff. Miss Lyotunn Thorsteinsson most frequently assisted the girls with the preparation of their classwork for the displays at the annual Rallies.

Every year an Achievement day was held at the Gimli Public School. On this day, the best work of the children was placed on display. Officials from the Extension Service were present to judge the sewing and to present the awards.

After 1955, all extra-curricular activities ceased to be sponsored by the Gimli Public School, and reverted to out-of-school projects for the 4-H Clubs. Since 1960, there has been a renewal of interest in sewing and it is again being taught at the Gimli elementary school.

4-H Clubs. In recent years, a number of sewing, shopwork, calf, poultry, garden, drawing, and handicraft clubs have been organized throughout the Evergreen School Division. These are under the direction of the District Agricultural Representatives at Arborg and Teulon. The Teulon Representative is in charge of the Clubs in the south portion of the Division and includes Camp Morton. The Arborg Representative has the remaining area to the north. The clubs under the Teulon Representative devote much time to agricultural activities. Excellent Calf and Garden Clubs exist at Minerva and Camp Morton. Home Economics and Woodworking are the chief pursuits in the clubs under the guidance of the Arborg Representative. The Arborg Busy B's Home Economics Club, the Arborg Busy Beavers, and the Hnaua Home Economics, and Woodworking

Clubs are extremely active groups.

Much valuable 4-H Club work has been done in many of the smaller schools throughout the Division. These activities have been dealt with under the schools concerned in Chapter V.

## II. COURSES SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Youth Leadership Course. The Youth Leadership Course, as its name implies, was begun to develop future community leaders and to foster an active community life. When the first course was offered in 1939, this was a very desirable and worthwhile goal since most of the youths in the district were unemployed due to the Depression. The outbreak of World War II relieved this situation and the course ceased to be offered to the youths of the district but continued as an essential requirement for school teachers into the 1950's.

The course was given at a camp located north of the Gimli town limits on property acquired by the Department of Education when the O.B.U. (One Big Union), a socialist organization, was outlawed in Canada and failed to pay taxes on the property.

The following courses were offered: Citizenship, by Mr. and Mrs. John Craig; Food and Nutrition, by Nurse Ring; Physical Training, by Mr. Wray Yeomans, Mr. Roy Kepron, and Mr. George Nick, now Director of Physical Education for the Department of Education. The girls were instructed in Physical Education by Miss Armstrong. Other courses conducted were Dancing, and Handicrafts.

The courses promoted a strong feeling of solidarity among those participating. Many left to carry on the work in their own communities. Miss Ruby Thorsteinsson (now Mrs. R. Tergesen); Miss J. V. Thordarson; and John Howardson, each conducted courses in Gimli upon the completion of the Youth Leadership course.<sup>3</sup>

In the Fall of 1939, Mr. John K. Laxdal organized the young people of Gimli into groups that met in the Parish Hall two nights a week for lessons in tumbling, folk dancing, tap dancing, and physical training. Miss R. Thorsteinsson, Miss J. V. Thordarson, and John Howardson, were the instructors. All classes were well attended and the venture was well received and extremely successful. The courses concluded with an exhibition held in the spring. Two of the more accomplished participants, John Howardson and Isabelle Einarson, were selected to give an exhibition of their skills in Winnipeg.

Teacher Training. The Youth Leadership Course begun at Gimli became a requirement for teacher training during World War II. It was given as the final month of instruction to student teachers attending the Winnipeg Normal School.

After World War II, the course was offered annually during the month of July. For many years it was a requirement for permanent certification. The course carried a credit of three units. The course content was similar to that originally offered, with the addition of Public Speaking, Classroom Management, and Health.

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<sup>3</sup>Supplied by Miss J. V. Thordarson in an interview November 5, 1964.

Among the many Directors of the Youth Leadership summer school course, Inspector John H. Menzies held the position the longest--1947 to 1962.

The post World War II period saw a shift in emphasis placed on certain aspects of teacher training. The low academic qualifications of teachers was the cause of concern to The Manitoba Teachers' Society and the School Boards alike. This led to a change in the manner in determining teachers' salaries. Academic qualifications and experience became the chief criterion for the basis of payment. The single salary schedule was backed by The Manitoba Teachers' Society. The University of Manitoba assisted in rectifying the situation and improving the quality of the teachers by making it possible for a teacher to complete degree requirements extra-murally through attending Summer School and enrolling in Adult Education Extension Courses. This movement back to the university led to a decline in applicants for the Department of Educational professional courses. In 1962, the Teacher Training Centre ceased to operate due to insufficient enrolment. The course had ceased being a requirement for permanent certification.

Vocational Training. Starting February 1, 1965,<sup>4</sup> the Vocational Branch of the Department of Education offered an evening course for adults at the Arborg Collegiate. This program was sponsored jointly by the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba. It was organized by the Sub-Committee on Education recently formed for the

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<sup>4</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 7, February 12, 1965. p. 5.

Bifrost-Fisher Area Development Board at Arborg.

Correspondence courses. For many years the Correspondence Branch of the Department of Education has been offering courses in all grades to children unable to attend the regular schools in the province. Since many of the residents of the Evergreen School Division are fishermen, it is frequently necessary for them to have their families with them when they go north on the lake to fish during the Fall season. In these situations, the Department of Education has provided correspondence courses for the school age children until their return to the settlements. The lessons are forwarded to the regular classroom teacher for correction. A careful check of the progress made is kept in the school to which the pupil will return.

### III. COURSES SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

Home Making Course. In the Fall of 1938, a three-month Home Making course was held in what is now the home of Dr. and Mrs. F. Scribner in Gimli. This course was provided under the Dominion Provincial Youth Training plan to train young people between sixteen and twenty-five years of age for employment. The training could be strictly occupational or for the improvement of health and morale. Grants were made available through the Federal Department of Labour, which made agreements with the Provincial Departments, chiefly those of Education and Labour, which were prepared to pay half the cost of training projects.



The Home Making course at Gimli, had an enrolment of about forty. The girls came from throughout the surrounding district. Some attended from as far as twenty miles and had to secure board and room facilities in town. The subjects taught were sewing, cooking, and home planning.

The course was not offered again in 1939. Those girls who still desired training were able to enrol for classes at the Training School at the corner of Austin and Sutherland Streets in Winnipeg.<sup>5</sup>

#### IV. COURSES SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE

Gimli Training Centre. Since 1962, the summer camp that had been used for Teacher Training by the Department of Education, has been used by the Department of Welfare as a physical fitness training centre for young boys and girls throughout the province.

In 1965, a Folk and Dance Clinic was held by Mr. Hancock during the month of June. This was followed by a Leadership Camp held in July with one hundred and twenty-three girls participating during the first two weeks, and eighty boys taking part for last two weeks of the month. The eighteen leaders and instructors taught the fundamentals of sports with the expectation that youths will become leaders of organized sports in their communities.

In 1965, a beginning was made at renovating the huts and making them suitable for winter occupancy.

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<sup>5</sup>Supplied by Mrs. J. C. Gottfried in an interview July 10, 1965.

## V. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Audio-Visual Education. The Visual Education Branch of the Department of Education maintains a central film and film strip lending library whose holdings are available to all schools in the province. In addition, it subsidizes the rental of certain educational films which are available only from commercial distributors.

The Gimli Public School was the first school in the Evergreen School Division to make use of the services offered by the Visual Education Branch. The service was begun by J. K. Laxdal, the principal of the Gimli Public School, prior to World War II. Films were shown every Friday afternoon during the school year until 1956. Thereafter, films continued to be shown weekly in Grades One to Four, and only occasionally in the other grades.

A number of schools in the Division now make audio-visual education a regular feature of the school program.

General Shop. The first General Shop course was begun at the Gimli Public School by Mr. Oscar Solmundson in 1938. For many years prior, Mr. Oscar Solmundson gave a course in fretwork. The work was so enthusiastically received by his Grade Seven and Eight students that he prevailed upon the school board to institute regular shopwork classes and to finance the cost of a woodworking course for himself. The Board agreed and a shop room was prepared in the school basement. Classes were held every Friday afternoon.

The General Shop room contained six double work benches complete with bench vises and sufficient hand tools for twelve students. The first classes were confined to instruction in woodworking with emphasis on fretsaw work.

Mr. Oscar Solmundson left Gimli to enlist as a pilot in World War II, his successor, Mr. Alexander Ewanchuk, continued giving instruction in shopwork. About 1940, a special grant was made available by the Department of Education for the purchase of shop equipment. A wood lathe, drill press, and forge were added to the shop.

Mr. H. E. Beddome, a conscientious teacher with a love for wood-working, succeeded Mr. A. Ewanchuk and expanded the working area of the shop to accommodate about twenty boys. New benches were added and the work areas were defined to provide better control of the students. When Mr. H. E. Beddome resigned in 1946 to accept the position of Town Clerk for Gimli, local help was solicited to continue the work he had begun in the shop.

In 1946, Mr. John C. Gottfried was engaged as the Grade Seven and Eight teacher with a class of fifty-one pupils. When the efforts of local help in the Shop proved unsuccessful, Mr. J. C. Gottfried was requested in November to take charge of the Shopwork. In addition to his regular class work, he became responsible for the Shopwork in Grades Eight, Nine, and Ten. In 1947, Mr. J. C. Gottfried attended a General Shop course at the Manitoba Technical Institute and was granted an Industrial Arts certificate. He became the first qualified instructor in Gimli. During the following year the shop facilities

were expanded to include a pattern making and aluminum moulding area. An additional wood lathe was purchased, and the drill press was adapted for planing and shaping. Drafting became a major subject.

An Achievement Day was held annually in June in which awards were made to outstanding pupils for the years' work. The desks, end-tables, wood-laminated table lamps, ash tray stands, and numerous smaller wood models, all expertly finished in French-polish over oak, walnut, and mahogany grain, were all placed on display. In addition, there were moulded aluminum book ends, ash trays, and nut-crackers to be viewed along with the many objects made in the forge, such as, polished tempered steel chisels of all types and sizes, wrecking bars, and punches. Prizes were awarded for the best models in each classification.

When the high school grades moved into the new Collegiate Institute in 1951, it became impractical to carry on shopwork instruction in these grades. The classes were then limited to Grades Six, Seven, and Eight. Mr. Alfred Rhoel assisted Mr. J. C. Gottfried with the work. In 1954, Mr. Cecil Hopko replaced Mr. A. Rhoel. When Mr. John C. Gottfried resigned in 1956, and Mr. Cecil Hopko left in 1957 to accept the position of Industrial Arts Instructor in West Kildonan, the Gimli School Board could find no one capable of conducting shopwork and the course had to be withdrawn. One or two attempts have since been made to revive interest, but these have failed

Kindergarten. The first Kindergarten classes in the Gimli Public School commenced on October 20, 1957.<sup>6</sup> Twenty children were

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<sup>6</sup>Selkirk Enterprise, October 20, 1957.

registered for the first class, held in the basement of the Lutheran Church. The teachers were: Mrs. J. H. Menzies; Mrs. A. Seaby; and Mrs. D. R. Oakley. When the Gimli Composite High School was opened, Kindergarten became a regular feature of the school program with a room provided in the Gimli elementary school.

Goulding School on the R.C.A.F. Station at Gimli has the distinction of being the first school in the Evergreen School Division to institute Kindergarten as a regular part of the school program. The first classes were held in the Fall of 1952. That the project had been very successful is due in large measure to the excellent teachers, Miss Gloria Kuleba, and Miss J. V. Thordarson.<sup>7</sup>

A Kindergarten class has begun in Arborg in recent years. The class is held in the Lutheran Church.

Music. Music, during the early years, found expression in community singing, church choirs, religious celebrations, and at dances and weddings at which songs characteristic of each ethnic group were sung. Each ethnic group in the Evergreen School Division has retained its music; however, only the Icelanders and Ukrainians have developed choral groups.

Music teachers who have made lasting contributions to musical education in the Division are: Mr. Oli Thorsteinsson, who taught both violin and piano lessons in the Gimli area for over thirty years;

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<sup>7</sup>Supplied by Mr. Allen Sargent in an interview November 9, 1964.

Miss Sylvia Thorsteinsson (Mrs. Oli Kardal), who taught piano at Gimli during the 1930's; Mr. Johannes Palsson, a violin teacher in the Arborg-Riverton area; Mrs. Martin, who has taught piano for many years in the Hnausa district; and Mrs. Gloria Valgardson, who succeeded Mr. O. Thorsteinsson in the Gimli area and remained the principal piano teacher until she perished in a fire which destroyed her home in February, 1965.

Numerous local orchestras have been organized in the area. The first band was begun by Mr. A. E. Kristjanson, a school teacher, in 1904. During the 1930's, another well-known orchestra was that organized by Mr. Hannes Kristjansson. His Old-Time Orchestra played at many of the dances in the area, and was always present at the Old-Timers Reunion Ball held annually during the month of May at the Gimli Park Pavilion. Mr. Ralph Gottfried, also conducted an orchestra during the 1930's and was the principal old-time fiddler in the district. Some of the better known orchestras in 1964 were: The Fifth, featuring Ron Smith; The Rhythmnaires, featuring the music of P. Dohun, and P. Hilcoff; The Sunset Trio, from Frazerwood, conducted by Mr. J. Capar.

During the 1920's, Band Concerts were held in the Gimli Park, and are still a feature of the annual Icelandic Celebrations.

Adult Education. Adult Education classes were first held in the Evergreen School Division at Goulding School. They were intended for servicemen only and were held under the auspices of the R.C.A.F. Education Officer. High school students from the town who desired to

better their standing were accepted. The subject most frequently demanded was high school mathematics.

The evening classes were conducted by the Education Officer, Mr. N. Danyluk, and Mr. J. C. Gottfried, in two-hour sessions held twice a week. These courses began in 1957 and were discontinued in 1960 due to insufficient demand.

Evening classes in Mathematics, Typing, and Sewing have been offered by the Gimli Composite High School. Mrs. P. McCabe, and Mr. T. Lagloire have instructed in typing; Mr. J. C. Gottfried, in Mathematics; and Mrs. S. Ewen, in Sewing. The demand for Adult Education evening classes has been steadily declining since they were first organized in 1961. Sewing, and Bookkeeping were taught during the 1964-65 school year.

Department of National Defence. The R.C.A.F. Base at Gimli was built in 1942 to train fighter pilots for Britain and her allies. After World War II it was reopened as a training base for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Many servicemen have received technical and advanced training in all phases of air warfare in addition to other educational services provided to better the performance of the servicemen.

During the war years, the servicemen were provided with the Canadian Legion Educational Services. The work was carried on chiefly by correspondence courses at the secondary level, however, there was a great variety of offerings including elementary, advanced, and non-academic courses. The federal government paid about ninety per cent

of the cost.

The R.C.A.F. Station maintains an Education Officer to assist and advise airforce personnel in the selection and completion of courses.

In 1956, the Gimli Flying Club was organized to train civilians to fly. The fee was reasonable and each candidate received a rebate of one hundred dollars upon the successful completion of the course. The Club began with two planes and by 1963, had acquired a third. There are always a sufficient number of candidates waiting to enrol. Many come from the neighbouring towns of Teulon, Riverton, and Arborg. The course takes about six months to complete, and about seventy persons have already secured their Private Licence. Recently the Club has purchased some new planes. The Chief Flying Instructor during 1964-65 has been Squadron Leader M. Sherwood.<sup>8</sup>

Other educational opportunities for service personnel are available in the many hobby clubs and sport and entertainment activities present on the Base.

#### VI. CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN

The organizational meeting for the Canadian Association for Retarded Children in Gimli, was held in the Town Hall on April 30, 1958.<sup>9</sup> The following were elected to the first committee: F/O Ray Stewart; Dr. George Johnson, the present Minister of Education;

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<sup>8</sup>Supplied by Mr. Edward Chudd in an interview July 19, 1965.

<sup>9</sup>Selkirk Enterprise, May 7, 1958.



T. K. Arnason; Allan Bailey; S. J. Stefansson; Mrs. S. J. Tergesen; N. Danyluk; Alex Kozlowski; Miss Brown; Mrs. F. Biluk; and Mrs. E. Howard.

The first years' operating expenses were derived from the following sources: (1) a municipal grant of \$100. (2) a parent fee of \$100. for each child. (3) donations from service clubs and interested citizens.

On May 29, 1958, the new executive met in the Town Hall to discuss the constitution of the Gimli Association for Retarded Children, and the engagement of a teacher for the Fall term.

A four-week course for teachers of trainable children was given at Kinsmen School. This course was evaluated as being equivalent to the regular Summer School courses given by the Department of Education.

Much credit goes to Mrs. E. Howard for the formation of a class for retarded children in Gimli. Due mainly to her concern for Dennis Kushnir, interest was aroused in what could be done for others like him. She was considerably assisted in this enterprise by Dr. George Johnson.

Classes commenced in the Fall of 1958 in the basement of the Lutheran Church. Three children were enrolled under the kindly and expert guidance of their teacher, Mrs. T. Kram. Tuition was given in the mornings from 9. to 11:30 a.m.

In 1961, the class was moved to its present location in the Gimli Public School No. 2. The space became available after the completion of the Gimli Composite High School.

In 1963, Mrs. T. Kram resigned and was succeeded by Mrs. W. McPherson, the present teacher. There were six pupils enrolled during the 1964-65 school year.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Allan Sergeant was elected President of the Association for the 1965 term. He succeeded Mr. S. Greenberg who had served in that capacity for a few years.

In 1963, a branch of the C.A.R.C. was started in Arborg.

#### VII. BOY SCOUT AND GIRL GUIDE ORGANIZATIONS

Boy Scouts and Cubs. The first Gimli Scout Group was organized at the R.C.A.F. Station at Gimli in the Fall of 1953. It was the first Scout and Cub unit formed in the area. The organizational meeting was called by Flight Sergeant Barnes, and Mr. Allan Sergeant, the principal of Goulding School.<sup>11</sup>

At the first meeting, a Group Committee was formed to plan and co-ordinate the activities of both the Girl Guide and Boy Scout movements. Flight Lieutenant Jack Gover was elected as Chairman of the Committee, and Flight Sergeant Allen, the Secretary-Treasurer. Other members of the committee were: Group Captain Richer; Padre Martin; Father Cartier; and Allan Sergeant. Several women were elected to represent the interests of the Girl Guides. For the first few years, one committee looked after the affairs of both the Scouts and Guides. Later, two committees were formed.

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<sup>10</sup>Supplied by Mr. Allan Sergeant in an interview November 9, 1964.

<sup>11</sup>Supplied by Mr. Allan Sargeant in an interview November 9, 1964.

The Boy Scout and Girl Guide organizations at the R.C.A.F. Station have been very active. They have been fortunate in securing capable and dedicated leaders. The excellent facilities available at the Station have contributed much to their success.

A Scout Group and Cub Pack were organized in the town of Gimli in the Fall of 1961. They were sponsored by the Gimli Branch of the Canadian Legion. The first Scout Leaders were Mr. Joseph Franz, and Donald Benedictson. The Cub Leaders were Mr. J. Taylor, and Mr. Stanley Krulicki.<sup>12</sup>

The Canadian Legion provided equipment, colours, cash donations, and a place for the meetings.

Boy Scout units have existed in the Winnipeg Beach, Whytewold and Matlock districts.

A number of Boy Scout camps exist along the lakeshore. Chief amongst these are the Salvation Army camp at Sandy Hook, and Gilwell Camp, two miles north of Gimli.

Girl Guides and Brownies. A Girl Guide company was first organized in Gimli in the Fall of 1944.<sup>13</sup> Miss Edith Loewen and Miss D. Eibert, two Gimli school teachers, were the first leaders. The following year, Miss Margaret Patterson (now Mrs. P. Olson) and Miss Bertha Vandersteen, also teachers at the Gimli school, took over the leadership of the Company. From the Fall of 1946 to 1948, Miss M.

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<sup>12</sup>Supplied by Mr. Joseph Franz in an interview November 10, 1964.

<sup>13</sup>Supplied by Mrs. Agnes Meredith in an interview January 5, 1965.

Patterson and Mrs. Keith Kingston provided the leadership for the organization. There were twenty-five Guides in the Company when it was forced to disband in 1948 due to lack of community support. During the first phase of development, the Guides used the Gimli School as their headquarters.

In 1953, the first Girl Guide unit was formed at the R.C.A.F. Station. Some of the girls from Gimli joined the Company. In the Fall of 1955 interest in Brownies was revived in Gimli and Miss D. Olson (now Mrs. J. Valgardson), and Miss Clara Bjarnason (now Mrs. W. R. Martin) provided the leadership. In May, 1965, the Second Gimli Girl Guides was formed. The first Captain was Mrs. E. Smart from the R.C.A.F. Station. Her Lieutenant was Mrs. P. Lenchuk. When Mrs. E. Smart resigned, Mrs. P. Lenchuk was promoted to the rank of Captain and Mrs. Dave Walker became her Lieutenant. Mrs. F. B. Millar was made Division Commissioner, and Mrs. C. Scribner was District Commissioner.

The following have held the rank of Captain from 1959 to 1965: Mrs. T. Paton; Mrs. I. Born; and Mrs. Agnes Meredith. During the same period the following have acted as Lieutenants: Mrs. A. Meredith, and Mrs. Harold Johnson.

In January, 1964, Mrs. B. Stiles was elected as the District Commissioner for the First and Second Girl Guide Companies in Gimli. In September, Mrs. P. Henry of Winnipeg Beach was made the Division Commissioner when Mrs. T. Paton resigned.

The following have served on the Mothers Group Committee of the Gimli Girl Guides and Brownies: Mrs. C. Scribner; Mrs. E. Stevens;

Mrs. T. Barker; and Mrs. J. C. Gottfried.

Smaller Girl Guide units have been formed at Winnipeg Beach, Whytewold, and Matlock.

#### VIII. NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Within a few months after the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in 1875, a newspaper, called Nyji Thjodolfur, was produced. It was a handwritten publication edited by Jon Gudmundson. Three issues were circulated before this enterprise came to an end.

On January 1, 1887, a co-operative, the New Iceland Publishing Company, was formed to begin printing a newspaper in Gimli. The Reverend Jon Bjarnason was chosen to go to Minneapolis to purchase a printing press with the necessary Icelandic letters. Framfari (The Progressive), as the paper was called, became the first Icelandic printed paper to be published in America. The first issue rolled off the press, September 10, 1877. Seventy-four issues were printed in the first two years; the last, on April 10, 1880. These are now kept in the Manitoba Archives in Winnipeg, as they provide invaluable source material on the history of New Iceland. The paper was published at Lundi, in the Icelandic River district. The Constitution of the Colony was printed in full and proclaimed in it on January 14, 1878, thereby, establishing the Republic of New Iceland. The publication had six hundred subscribers, but in spite of this, it was forced to discontinue its services because many were unable to pay their fees. The editors were: Sigtryggur Jonasson, and Halldor Briem. The printer

was Jonas Jonasson, Sigtryggur's brother.

One of the earliest printers at Gimli was Gisli Thompson. In 1893, he formed a partnership with Magnus J. Skaptason as editor, and published a magazine called Dagsbrun. After three years, the enterprise moved to Winnipeg where it continued publishing for one more year before going bankrupt. Gisli Thompson returned to Gimli where he began publishing a local newspaper with the assistance of Gudni Thorsteinsson as editor. This newspaper was printed twice a month and was called Bergmalid (The Echo). It brought out its first edition on December 18, 1897, and ceased publishing on February 14, 1901. Three years later, Gisli Thompson began publishing Svafa, a periodical. He was the owner, editor, and printer. It was printed in his farm home one mile north of Gimli.

In 1903, a co-operative was formed to publish a weekly newspaper called Baldur. This newspaper was published for seven years. The first editor was Einar Olafson who served until his death in August, 1907. Reverend Johann P. Solmundson succeeded him. These two men, Einar Olafson and Reverend Johann P. Solmundson, also began the publication, Ny Dagsbrun (The New Dawn). Only three copies were ever printed.

In 1910, G. P. Magnusson published Gimlung, a weekly paper containing mostly translated stories. At the same time he also published a monthly magazine called "Heimilis-vinurinn" (The Home Friend). An Icelandic paper or magazine has not been published by Icelanders in Gimli since 1911.

After 1911, the only Icelandic papers available were Heimskringla and Logberg, published weekly in Winnipeg. The first copy of the Heimskringla was published on September 9, 1886, with Freeman B. Arngrimsson as the first editor. It began as an independent paper ready to discuss any subject on its merits. This, however, gradually changed until the paper became Conservative and Unitarian. The Logberg's first copy was published on January 14, 1888. Einar H. Kvaran was the editor. The paper was Liberal and Lutheran. In August, 1959, these two papers joined to become known as the Logberg-Heimskringla.<sup>14</sup>

The settlers from Eastern Europe made no attempts to publish a newspaper since there existed in Winnipeg excellent publications printed in most European languages providing news coverage for the area. Most popular of these publications was the Polish paper, the Czas. (The Times).

At the present time, reporters in each of the main centres of the Division work to maintain a newspaper that serves chiefly the Arborg, Gimli, and Riverton communities of the Interlake area. This newspaper, The Lake Centre News, is published weekly by the Selkirk Publishers Limited at Selkirk. It has had a hard struggle for survival. During its approximately twenty-five years of existence it has been known by many names. For some years it maintained a news

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<sup>14</sup>Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson, *Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi*. Winnipeg: Columbia Press, Vol. II-III, 1943 and 1945. passim.

gathering office in Gimli, until Mrs. E. Howard became the local reporter. Now Arborg is the news centre. Today, there are two papers published in Selkirk, The Lake Centre News, and the Selkirk Enterprise. The former deals with news almost exclusively in the Evergreen School Division, while the latter covers a large part of the whole Interlake area.

The Gimli Star is published once a month at the R.C.A.F. Station at Gimli. Besides containing news of particular interest to the Station personnel, it also has news items of local interest.

#### IX. LIBRARIES

The Icelandic Library Association, which has been in existence ever since Gimli was founded almost ninety years ago, is the oldest organization still functioning in Gimli.<sup>15</sup> Along with the National Icelandic League, it is one of the last links with the homeland for the older Icelanders. Most of them are members; and they go each Sunday morning to the little building on Second Avenue that houses their precious collection of Icelandic literature. There, the older men meet to discuss their favourite books and poems. They carry home books to read and in this way renew their memories of the old land. Like the Annual Old-Timers' Reunion Ball, it may be threatened with extinction, for the young generation seldom goes there.

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<sup>15</sup>Selkirk Enterprise, April 26, 1957.



A concert and raffle are held annually by the Icelandic Library Association with the proceeds going towards the upkeep of the library and the purchase of new books.

For many years, Gimli has been served by the Womens' Institute Lending Library. This Library is located in Tergesen's Store. The books are made available to the public each Monday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The books are on loan from the University Extension Service.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1930's, the Ukrainian Peoples Home maintained a lending library at Dniester. At one time it had over four hundred books.

In the Fall of 1964, the electors of the town of Gimli approved the formation of a regional library. A vote taken in Riverton and Arborg resulted in the formation of the Evergreen Regional Library Board which is empowered to establish regional libraries. The Board has decided that Gimli should be the location of the main library, with branch libraries in Riverton and Arborg.

In April, 1965, Mayor Violet Einarson of Gimli announced that the government had decided to make an additional establishment grant of \$6,000. available to the Evergreen Regional Library because the library region covered more municipalities than most, with a larger population.

The five municipal councils involved in the regional library have agreed that a local tax of not more than one mill will be added to

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<sup>16</sup>Selkirk Enterprise, November 21, 1957.

the fund. It is understood that the first \$7,500. will be spent on books.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 17, April 23, 1965. p. 1.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Educational organizations exercise a beneficial influence to shape the course of governmental action in a democratic society. The method by which organizations make themselves felt in the legislature is referred to as "lobbying". The term "lobbying" is applied to the various activities employed by those groups which have spokesmen or information offices for the purpose of accumulating information and persuading government officials to act in harmony with their interests.

This Chapter will deal only with those organizations that hold regular meetings in the Evergreen School Division with the intention of bettering education.

#### I. THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is the professional organization of the teachers in the province. It was incorporated in 1942 by the Revised Statutes of Manitoba, Chapter 60.<sup>1</sup> Its policies have been developed through the years by the deliberations of a Provincial Council. This, the governing body of the Society, comprises about three hundred representatives elected by the total membership. The budget for 1964 was \$327, 037.00. Local and Division Associations make their wishes known to their councillors through annual Fall Conventions

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<sup>1</sup>Revised Statutes of Manitoba, Chapter 60. Section 4 (a) (d).

and other regular meetings. These wishes are in turn approved and presented for consideration to the Provincial Council at an annual Easter Convention of all the delegates. The Manitoba Teachers' Society is thus able to present a considered and official policy of the teaching profession in Manitoba.

The aim of The Manitoba Teachers' Society is to promote and advance the cause of education in the province and to secure conditions for teachers which will make possible the best professional services.

The formation of Locals. A Local Association is the smallest unit of administration in The Manitoba Teachers' Society. It consists of members of the Society conveniently located to organize for mutual benefit. Within each Division Association, there may be several Local Associations. The functions of these local associations vary from division to division. They may make recommendations, but not final decisions, on matters that concern all teachers in the division.

When the first Locals were formed in 1947, Inspectoral Division No. 21. included five major centres: Teulon, Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Riverton, and Arborg. Riverton Local No. 21-1 was the first to become incorporated on March 14, 1947. Mr. William Chimchak was elected President, and Frances Finnon became the first Secretary-Treasurer. Arborg Local was the next to be formed; and in the Fall of 1947, Gimli Local No. 21-3 received its charter. The first President at Gimli was Mr. John C. Gottfried. The Winnipeg Beach-Whytewold-Petersfield Local Association was formed on March 16, 1948 with Mr. J. Dawson as

President. Teulon Local No. 21-5 was the last to be organized.<sup>2</sup>

Since their formation, the number of Locals within the District has altered with each change in the boundary of the Inspectoral Division. In 1950, the Winnipeg Beach-Whytewold-Petersfield Local ceased operating and resigned its charter. It then became part of Gimli Local No. 21-3. Arborg Local later united with Riverton Local No. 21-1; and Teulon Local ceased being included with Inspectoral Division No. 21. There are now three local associations in the Evergreen School Division: Gimli, Arborg and Riverton.

Early professional problems. During the first few years of growth, the deliberations of the members of each local association were confined to the most pressing problems of the profession, namely: the improvement of the professional and academic qualifications of teachers, and the securing of salaries comparable to those paid in other professions for similar qualifications and experience. With respect to qualifications, the locals urged teachers to better their standings by attending University and Department of Education summer school courses. Because of the increased demand for University courses by the teachers, the University of Manitoba revised its regulations making it possible for a teacher to secure a degree through attendance at Summer Schools or Adult Education evening classes. Such students were only required to be in regular attendance at the University for the final year; and even this condition was frequently waived for sufficient

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<sup>2</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Winnipeg.

reason. The most pressing problem, however, was the matter of securing sufficient remuneration for services rendered to enable a teacher to continue to survive in the profession. Resolutions to Central Office requesting Federal aid, and the use of the process of collective bargaining contained in the Labour Relations Act became the chief weapons employed by the teachers. All efforts to eliminate permit teachers through the enforcement of the existing minimum requirements of a complete Grade XII for acceptance to Normal School met with failure since the province had a responsibility to keep the schools operating in spite of the shortage of fully-qualified teachers.

The matter of teacher pensions has received much consideration by the local associations. Improvements have resulted in a pension plan comparable to that received by the Manitoba Civil Service with retirement at age sixty on a reduced pension if the teacher has thirty years of service, or retirement at age sixty-five with fifteen or more years of service out of the last twenty years. A compulsory contribution of 6% of salary is payable to the annuities account. The last revision of the Teachers' Pension Act was approved by the Manitoba Legislature in 1963. The possibility of securing portability of pensions between provinces is now under consideration by the Legislature.

Teacher tenure has improved greatly in recent years. Regulations state that where a teacher has been employed by a school district or division for more than two years, further tenure rights are provided. The provisions are outlined in Section 263 (2A) of the Public Schools Act. Under this section, a teacher who is dissatisfied with being

dismissed may require that the matter of the termination of the agreement be submitted to an arbitration board.

The right to strike. The members of the teaching profession early realized that before they could deal effectively with the many urgent professional problems besetting them, the more mundane matter of adequate teacher salaries had to be dealt with.

Since 1948 the teachers of Manitoba, through Local and District Associations of The Manitoba Teachers' Society have been bargaining collectively with school districts in various parts of the province. Because the regulations in the Manitoba Labour Relations Act were being invoked, many school boards felt that the teachers might also employ labour tactics to secure their objectives. Strike action was being frequently resorted to by labour unions and the possibility of such action being employed by teachers was not beyond the realm of possibility since many were desperate and impatient for improvement in teaching conditions.

The highlight of the 1955 Fall Convention held by Inspectoral Division No. 21. at St. Boniface was the session dealing with the question of surrendering the right to strike. The request was being made by the Manitoba School Trustees' Association, and in the resulting discussions the members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society agreed to give up their rights in exchange for compulsory arbitration. At later meetings, the two associations made a study of their problems which led, in 1956, to the passing of new legislation jointly agreed to by both

parties and finally framed by the Department of Education.

To meet all objections of the trustees, the teachers finally agreed to have all their bargaining rights under the Labour Relations Act transferred to the Public Schools Act with one important change: Provision was made for a binding arbitration if no agreement was reached after due process of conciliation. This eliminated the possibility of eventual strike action.

Collective bargaining. The following excerpts taken from "Beyond Collective Bargaining", explains the procedures followed in collective bargaining prior to its incorporation into the Public Schools Act.<sup>3</sup>

When a District or Local Association of The Manitoba Teachers' Society is properly organized. . .it may apply for certification as a bargaining agent on behalf of its members in good standing.

. . . The certificate having been granted, the Local Association may, on behalf of its members, by notice, require the School Board or School Boards to commence bargaining collectively and. . . "shall make every reasonable effort to conclude a collective agreement".

Where agreement has not been reached within a reasonable time, either party may request the Minister of Labour, in writing, to appoint a conciliation officer to assist the parties in reaching an understanding. The request should also state the nature of the difficulties which have prevented them from reaching the agreement.

Should the conciliation officer fail to conclude an agreement, he will report to the Minister, who may appoint or cause to be appointed, a conciliation board, one member from each side, with a neutral chairman, to endeavour to reach an agreement. These are the minimum procedures laid down in Chapter 27 of the Revised Statutes of the Province of Manitoba.

In 1946, an average salary paid to teachers in the Gimli Public School was about \$1100. a year. Salaries were somewhat lower in the

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<sup>3</sup>T. A. McMaster, Beyond Collective Bargaining. Winnipeg: The Manitoba Teachers' Society, 1950. pp. 40-42.



rural schools and higher in the urban centres. The teachers were required to bargain individually to determine their salaries each year. There was little relationship between qualifications, experience, and the salary a teacher received. Most school boards preferred to determine the salary by the positional method or the grade placement on the staff, on the theory, that, as a teacher improved in ability, he would progress upward through the grades. At the top would be found the high school principal. Such a view was easily arrived at, being a natural extension of the trustee's own experience with education.

School boards were generally in agreement that teachers should receive higher remuneration for superior qualifications. The general public also supported this view. As a result, the teachers, through the Society, began a concerted drive to increase their academic qualifications, and have the gains entered in individual salary agreements with each school district. The locals were organized to present a united front to each school board throughout the province, and collective bargaining became the method employed for securing and recording permanent gains. This phase of Society activity occupied most of the decade beginning in 1950.

In Inspectoral Division No. 21, the Gimli Local, being the largest, was looked upon for leadership. The fact that a collective bargaining agreement was not satisfactorily concluded between The Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Gimli School Board until November 20, 1954, delayed the introduction of similar agreements between teachers and school boards throughout the Division.

The first attempt of the teachers to bargain collectively with the Gimli School Board was made in the Spring of 1947. The meeting was held in the Town Hall. Each teacher was given the opportunity to express his or her feelings about school board policies and the methods employed in the payment of teacher salaries. As a result, some teachers were granted increases ranging from \$50. to \$400. for the forthcoming school year. No collective agreement was signed, however, the Board promised annual increments of fifty dollars.

From 1947 to 1953, no serious attempts were made to obtain a collective bargaining agreement. Meetings which resulted in minor salary increases were held between representatives of the teachers and the school board. During these years, the teachers leaving Normal School set a minimum below which they would not accept employment. The salaries paid at Gimli, kept pace with the minimum demanded by the beginners from Normal School. The teachers believed that the school board was unable to offer more because of the uncertain post-war economy and the weak taxation base of the Gimli district. Discontent and uncertainty began to be felt by the teachers from about 1949 when the school board was forced to pay new teachers coming on the staff, more than the better qualified and more experienced members. One of the first resignations over salary matters was received by the Board in 1949. Each succeeding year, others left for higher paying positions. In 1952, one of the most capable teachers on the staff resigned when the Board refused a \$50. increase which would have resulted in an annual salary

slightly above that demanded by teachers from the Normal School. When it became known that year that the Town was setting aside a reserve fund for the installation of water works in Gimli, and that the Town Council had passed a motion requesting the School Board not to sign any agreement with the teachers that would commit the Town to future salary increases,<sup>4</sup> the teachers began to make earnest preparations to secure a collective bargaining agreement in Gimli.

In the Spring of 1953, the Gimli school teachers elected a negotiating committee composed of Mr. J. Packota, Mr. P. Susky, and Mr. J. C. Gottfried to begin bargaining with the Gimli School Board.

On April 25, 1953, Mr. J. Packota, the chairman of the negotiating committee, forwarded the following report to Central Office:<sup>5</sup>

We held meetings April 15, and again on April 24th. At the end of the second meeting, the Board said it was no longer willing to meet with our committee for the purpose of bargaining in order to arrive at an acceptable salary schedule

The matter was referred to the Minister of Labour, whereupon, the Deputy Minister of Labour wrote the Gimli School Board as follows:<sup>6</sup>

. . . Promptly on receipt of this letter, I will be obliged if you will write me and give me your version of the situation, and if you have been under any misapprehension as to your obligations, it would be well to reconsider and thereupon to reenter into vigorous and meaningful negotiations with the Association with a view to fulfilling your duties under the Act.

On May 15, 1953, a letter was received at Central Office of The Manitoba Teachers' Society from Miss Gloria Johnson, the secretary of

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<sup>4</sup>Supplied by Mr. H. E. Beddome, in an interview April, 1953.

<sup>5</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Letter, April 25, 1953.

<sup>6</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Letter, May 15, 1953.

the Gimli Local, requesting the services of a conciliation officer.<sup>7</sup> Before the last day of May, the Board made an offer which was acceptable to the teachers and rather than contribute to a deteriorating teacher-trustee relationship, the teachers decided to forgo a signed collective bargaining agreement.

The following year, in February, 1954, the teachers met and elected the following to form a negotiating committee to meet with the Gimli School Board: Mrs. Edith Orton; Miss Ethel Greenberg; Mr. J. C. Gottfried; Mr. John Packota; and Mr. John Dyck, as chairman.

In a letter sent to Mr. T. A. McMaster and received on March 30, 1954 at McMaster House, the negotiating committee had this to report:<sup>8</sup>

Our first meeting to negotiate with the Board was held March 3. Mr. J. H. Menzies began his inspection on March 4. Our second meeting was held on March 17. His report to the trustees, stated to cover an official visit dating from March 4 to March 18, was produced and read to our negotiating committee at the meeting, in support of the trustees stand against agreeing to a salary schedule. Rightly or wrongly, we feel that the entire tenor of the report is prejudicial to our side of the bargaining negotiations, and is so intended.

In particular we take exception to these two statements:

"You have a well-paid staff. The salary paid is above that of any of the other schools. I will not say that your return is proportionate to that of the others."

... "I would also like to see some members of your staff earn the salary that they are receiving at the present time."

The letter went on further to state that:

The Board then made the suggestion that a joint meeting be held of Inspector, teachers, and School Board to "clear the air". At this meeting, the teachers would have the opportunity to discuss their work with the inspector.

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<sup>7</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Letter, May 15, 1953.

<sup>8</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Letter, March 30, 1954.

The letter was written by Miss B. Jackson, the Secretary of the Gimli Local.

In the negotiations, the teachers had asked for a basic salary of \$2200. or \$2300. with six or eight increments of \$150. The Board would not consider a continuing agreement because of the instructions they had received from the Town Council, mentioned previously, and for other personal and unknown reasons. The following counter proposal made for the next school year read as follows:<sup>9</sup>

Mrs. Ellen Magnusson . . . . .	\$2550.
Mrs. Lyotunn Thorsteinsson . . . . .	\$2400.
Miss E. Greenberg . . . . .	\$2400.
Mrs. Edith Orton . . . . .	\$2550.
Mr. Peter Susky. . . . .	\$2550.
Mr. John C. Gottfried . . . . .	\$2850.
Miss S. Stefansson . . . . .	\$3150.
Mr. John Dyck . . . . .	\$2900.
Miss Betty Jackson . . . . .	\$2600.
Mr. John Packota . . . . .	\$3500. with the proviso that he fulfill the requirements of the Inspector's report including supervision of supplemental examinations.

The teachers resented the school inspector becoming involved in their attempts to negotiate with the School Board. They also objected to his position on the Town Council. Their objections were brought to the attention of the Provincial Council. Mr. Robert Bend, who later became the Minister of Education for a brief period, and Mr. L. A. Floyd, who has since been appointed Inspector of Schools, were assigned the task of discussing the problem with the local Inspector.

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<sup>9</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Gimli Local No. 21-3.

For these reasons, the teachers did not meet with the School Board and Inspector as had been suggested to the negotiating committee.

The School Board's bargaining maneuver of introducing a letter written by the local Inspector had failed in its original purpose. It served, instead, to make the teachers aware of the fact that the School Board and the Inspector were acting to thwart their efforts. The immediate effect of this insight was to strengthen their resolve to secure a collective bargaining agreement since the alternative would have been tantamount to an admission of the charges made by the Inspector and this was unacceptable.

At the next ensuing meeting with the School Board, the teachers attempted to make a fresh start at negotiations; but the Board, confident of its position, refused to participate actively in bargaining.

Once again the negotiations came to a standstill and the teachers found it necessary to request the services of a conciliation officer. The Minister of Labour appointed Mr. J. White. His efforts were unsuccessful; and, during May, the Gimli School Board received the resignations of seven of its thirteen teachers. On May 27, 1954, Mr. John Dyck, the Chairman of the teachers' negotiating committee, requested the appointment of a Conciliation Board. No agreement was reached before the summer recess.

Fully qualified replacements to the staff were difficult to obtain, not only because of the teacher shortage, but also because the School Board was still in dispute with its teachers. The request for a Conciliation Board was refused because of the changes in the teaching staffs,

and notification of this fact was received on July 27th. The new teachers were engaged subject to a salary still to be agreed upon.

In an effort to resolve the dispute between the Gimli School Board and its teachers, Mr. T. A. McMaster, the General Secretary of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, requested Mr. John C. Gottfried to present a resume of the negotiations at Gimli to the annual meeting of District and Local Presidents and Secretaries representing all the teachers in the province. He was also requested to read to the delegates the letter written by the local Inspector in support of the School Board's stand. After due deliberation, the delegates decided that the Gimli teachers should make another attempt at conciliation, and this intention was conveyed to the Minister of Labour. In a meeting held by the teachers at Gimli, Mr. John C. Gottfried was elected Chairman of a negotiating committee to attempt further meetings with the School Board. The teachers decided that no further action would be taken against the Inspector.

A certified copy of his controversial letter was forwarded to The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

The stress of prolonged negotiations served to increase the solidarity of the teachers. They became more professional in their outlook with the result that the prestige of the teacher rose in the community. More students in the district came to regard teaching as an attractive profession. The matter was reported to all the teachers in the province in an article on page 54 of the November-December, 1954

edition of The Manitoba Teacher. It read as follows:

(2) Strong disapproval was voiced of the situation existing at Gimli where the Board was reported to have attempted to break down the efforts of teachers to gain an agreement by producing a special report from the Inspector suggesting that teachers there were well paid and indicating that some of them were not earning the salary they were then receiving. Resolutions were passed urging the executive to investigate the matter thoroughly, to bring the matter to the attention of the Department of Education at the appropriate time and to see that such a situation could not recur. It was felt that if such were the case, the Inspector could no longer perform his duties to the advantage of the community.

On November 20, 1954, the Gimli Local was informed that the Gimli School Board was willing to re-enter negotiations with the teachers. At the first meeting, Mr. Frank Arnason, the Chairman of the Board, expressed a willingness to negotiate a collective agreement since most of the progressive schools in the province now had one. The salary increases finally arrived at served to vindicate the teachers in their requests. This agreement was the first one in the Division to be negotiated by the teachers as members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society. It was soon followed by others in all the larger centres. Little progress, however, was made in the one-room rural schools until the establishment of the Evergreen School Division.

The Manitoba Royal Commission on Education. The appointment of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education in 1957 to investigate and report on all aspects of education in the province had been long awaited by the teachers.

At the Easter Convention held in 1957, the Provincial Council



authorized the Provincial Executive to prepare and present to the Royal Commission, a Brief embodying such suggestions as are consistent with the objects of the Society. The Local Associations offered suggestions to the Provincial Executive and some prepared submissions for presentation to the Royal Commission as it visited each locality.

The suggestions contained in the Brief of The Manitoba Teachers' Society contained many of the views presented and advocated by the Locals in Inspectoral Division No. 21. The Brief grouped the suggestions under three headings: Finance and Administration; Staffing the Schools; and Curriculum. All the suggestions were based on seven principles which the members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society believed to be fundamental.<sup>10</sup>

- (1) All children in all parts of the province have a right to an equitable educational opportunity.
- (2) The educational services to be provided must be at the highest standard the province can afford.
- (3) The cost of providing the educational service must be shared by the citizens of the province according to their ability to pay.
- (4) Education is such a direct personal service that there must be a large measure of local support and control.
- (5) The right of all children to an equitable educational opportunity at the highest standard the province can afford implies the necessity of staffing all schools with the best teachers that can be obtained.
- (6) Since the public school system accepts all children regardless of their ability or background, it must recognize and make provision for the multiple individual differences within the enrolment.

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<sup>10</sup>Brief, presented to The Royal Commission on Education by The Manitoba Teachers' Society, November 14, 1957. p. ii.

(7) Equitable educational opportunities can be provided only if there is coordination, leadership, and evaluation, on the one hand, balanced on the other by freedom to adapt curricula and services to individual differences and local conditions.

In the 1958 provincial election, Mr. John C. Gottfried, President of the District Association, urged teachers to take an active interest in the election campaign with the view of supporting the political party pledged to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Mr. Allan Sergeant, and Mr. John C. Gottfried attended a number of the political rallies and Mr. Allan Sergeant frequently took the floor to speak on behalf of the cause of education.

When the Conservative government was elected in 1958, the Educational Minister, Honourable Stewart E. McLean, worked immediately towards the betterment of education in the province. Great strides were made in many areas; including the establishment of the school divisions and a greatly improved pension plan. Further advances have been made under the succeeding Minister of Education, the Honourable George Johnson, M.L.A. for the Gimli constituency.

The Evergreen Division Association. When Evergreen School Division was established in 1959, The Manitoba Teachers' Society, reorganized the boundary of its District Association to correspond to that of the Evergreen School Division No. 22. Three Local Associations were retained, one in each of the centres: Arborg, Gimli, and Riverton. The schools in the Division were grouped with each centre as shown on The Manitoba Teachers' Society circular contained in the Appendix.

The organizational meeting of the Evergreen Division Association

was held at the Legion Hall at Gimli on April 15, 1959. Mr. J. Dawson acted as chairman. In the election that followed, Mr. J. Dawson was chosen as President and Miss Irene Eggertson was elected Secretary. The Constitution of the Evergreen Division Association No. 22 was then read and adopted.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Clifford C. Wood, Field Representative for The Manitoba Teachers' Society, rendered valuable assistance in preparing the groundwork for the Division Association.

One of the first tasks faced by the Division Executive was securing a satisfactory collective agreement between the secondary teachers and the Evergreen School Board. When the negotiating committee met in the Fall of 1959, they found the Division Board most reasonable and cooperative. A salary schedule was soon negotiated that compared favourably with others in the province.

Since the formation of the Evergreen Division Association, the role of the Locals has steadily diminished. The Division executive has been accepting an ever-increasing share in caring for the local needs of all the teachers in the Division. This move towards greater centralization of control is in keeping with the recent trend toward further consolidation of the elementary schools under the Division Board.

With most of the schools in the Division now paying their teachers under a salary schedule, the teachers have been able to devote more attention to professional subjects. The Division Executive has organized a number of Workshops in recent years; some dealing with the

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<sup>11</sup>Manitoba Teachers' Society Files, Winnipeg.

General Course and English.

Outstanding among those who have contributed towards the growth of The Manitoba Teachers' Society in the Evergreen School Division are: Mr. Peter Onysko, who has been a member of the executive for almost twenty-five years; Mr. John C. Gottfried, for ten years the president of the Gimli Local, a frequent delegate to Easter Conventions, and a District president; Mr. Allen Sargeant, who has held various executive positions during the past fifteen years including that of area consultant for salary negotiators; and Mr. C. Hamelynck, who has done much splendid work in the Evergreen Division Association as President and bargaining agent for teachers in the small one-room rural schools.

At the 1965 Easter Convention, The Manitoba Teachers' Society paid tribute to an outstanding teacher and loyal supporter of the Society, Miss S. Stefansson, by awarding her a life membership in the Society.<sup>12</sup>

On May 19, 1965, Miss Rose Polka, Goulding School, was elected President of the Evergreen Division Association. She succeeded Mr. C. Hamelynck. Other members elected to the executive for the 1965-66 school year were: Mr. A. Frieson, Vice-President; Mr. H. Kroeker, Secretary. Committee chairmen were appointed as follows: Curriculum, Mr. A. Sargeant; Membership, Mr. A. Friesen; Pensions, Mr. J. Masyk; Public Relations, Mr. J. Keryluk; Recreation and Resolutions,

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<sup>12</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 17, April 23, 1965. p. 1.

Mr. M. Reichenholler; Salaries, Mr. P. Capar.<sup>13</sup>

II. HOME AND SCHOOL AND PARENT TEACHERS FEDERATION  
OF MANITOBA INCORPORATED

The Goulding Home and School Association held its organizational meeting in September, 1955. The groundwork for the introduction of the association was conducted by F/L Jack Oickle, and Mr. Allan Sergeant, the principal of Goulding School. When Mr. N. Danyluk arrived to assume his duties as principal of the school in 1955, the plans had been made to hold the first Home and School meeting.<sup>14</sup>

The Goulding School Home and School Association has been very successful in that it has always been able to secure a capable executive. The meetings, which are held once a month, are usually well attended. Interesting speakers are engaged to stimulate discussion and provoke thought on leading educational issues. This group has been the genesis of the groups later formed in the town of Gimli.

In 1954, Mr. John C. Gottfried, the principal of the elementary school at Gimli, wrote to the Home and School Association in Winnipeg for descriptive literature and information regarding the formation of a unit in Gimli. A meeting of the teachers was called to discuss the matter. It was decided to postpone the venture until a more suitable time, since the teachers were then engaged in a drawn-out salary dispute with the School Board. It had been the hope of Mr. John C.

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<sup>13</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5., No. 22, May 28, 1965. p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Supplied by Mr. Allen Sergeant, in an interview November 22, 1964.

Gottfried that the existence of such an association at that time would have gone far towards promoting better teacher-trustee relations.

The organizational meeting of the Gimli Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation of Manitoba Incorporated was held in the Gimli Collegiate Institute on October 19, 1955. The organizational committee composed of Mrs. S. Stefansson, Mrs. K. Keller, and Mr. Eric Stefanson, invited the President of the Home and School Federation of Manitoba, Mrs. R. E. H. Armstrong, to address the gathering. The second meeting was the scene of a lively discussion on the merits and disadvantages of the Larger Area of School Administration. Subsequent meetings were poorly attended and the organization ceased holding meetings the second year. The school was experiencing great difficulties in teacher recruitment and retention. Public action was needed and no one wanted to assume the responsibility.

On October 30, 1963, a meeting was held to reorganize the Home and School Association in Gimli.<sup>15</sup> The speakers, Mr. R. Buck, principal of the Gimli Composite High School, and Squadron Leader N. A. Keene, Official Trustee of Goulding School, addressed the few in attendance on the importance of the Home and School Association in the community. In the election which followed, Mr. John Hykawy was made President and Mrs. E. Mockford, Secretary. The meetings held to date have not been well attended.

The executive elected for the 1964-65 school year are Mr. Harold Dalman, President; and Mrs. Hubert Bouillet, Secretary.

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<sup>15</sup>Supplied by Mrs. Hubert Bouillet in an interview July 22, 1965.

### III. THE MANITOBA ASSOCIATION FOR EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

In the Spring of 1964, a group of Catholic laymen, representing almost every parish in Manitoba, met at St. Pauls' College on the University campus to form an association to promote public acceptance of the principle of government aid to private and parochial schools. The provincial executive elected at that meeting met in September to set up committees dealing with: (1) organization and co-ordination, (2) inter-denominational dialogue, (3) research and statistics, (4) publications, (5) goals and programs, (6) finance and administration. To care for correspondence and office work, an office located at 208 Cadomin Building, Winnipeg, was secured for the Executive Director Mr. Leo Soenen.

When the Manitoba Legislature made its proposal on "Shared Services", expressions of general dissatisfaction by those affected led to the formation of a special nine-member committee to explore ways and means of implementing the plan. The committee met November 9, and 10; and 19 and 20, to hear public representations with respect to its terms of references on Shared Services. Arthur V. Mauro, the president of the M.A.E.E. presented a Brief drawn up by the provincial executive explaining in detail the Catholic viewpoint. This Brief was presented to the Legislative Committee on November 10, 1964. The Brief clearly indicated the opinion of the Association that an injustice had been worked upon the Catholic citizens of Manitoba. It suggested that the issue was one of civil rights - not only of religious

intolerance. A just solution depended on an informed and tolerant electorate.

On November 15, 1964, simultaneous meetings were held in Metropolitan Winnipeg and in ten regional centres, to organize and unite all those supporting the views of the Association. The Evergreen School Division came under the jurisdiction of the executive of District No. 10. of the M.A.E.E. The area includes St. Laurent, St. Ambroise, Stony Mountain, Teulon, Little Britain, Arborg, Camp Morton, Ashern, Fisher Branch, Lundar, Gimli, and Komarno.<sup>16</sup>

To date, local units have been organized at Gimli, and Arborg in the Evergreen School Division. Others are in the process of being formed.

The organizational meeting of the Gimli Local of the M.A.E.E. was held on November 26, 1964 in St. Michael's Hall. Elected for 1965 were the following members of the executive: President, J. C. Gottfried; vice-president, Allen Sargeant; secretary-treasurer, Joseph Franz; and three directors, George VanBuckenhaut, George Despins, and Emil Grabojeski.<sup>17</sup>

The members of the executive elected to the Arborg Local are: president, J. M. Rakai; vice-president, Dora Senow; secretary-treasurer, Tony Sorokowski; and three directors, Walter Kazimir, Walter Miczolowski, and Frank Gergatz.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Sunday Herald, Vol. 3, No. 44, November 8, 1964. Winnipeg, Manitoba. p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>Sunday Herald, Vol. 3, No. 47, December 6, 1964, Winnipeg, Manitoba. p. 11.

<sup>18</sup>Sunday Herald, Vol 3, No. 49, Dec.13, 1964. Winnipeg. p. 11.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION

While most institutions experienced an upward economic surge during and following World War II, educational growth and development in Manitoba remained almost at a standstill, so deep were the scars left by the 1929-39 Depression, and the inroads made upon educational thought by materialistic philosophies. The emergence of the U.S.S.R. as a major world power after World War II tended further to support and lend credence to the proponents of materialistic thinking. It is significant that education in the great democracies should have been at its lowest ebb at that stage in human progress when mankind was so suddenly and unceremoniously thrust into the Space Age. This fact, when viewed in conjunction with the knowledge that there now existed the means of total annihilation for the human race in the form of the atomic bomb, led to an increased concern over the destiny of the human race, and a reassessment of the aims of education.

The clarification of human values and their reformulation in order to give expression in terms of life and opportunities in existence today and for the immediate future is the prime task of educational administrators. The one-room rural school and the old curriculum are no longer adequate.

A changing culture necessitates changes in the basic ideals, norms, and tools or material used by its members. A change in the basic ideals and norms is an ideological change; a change in the use

of tools or material such as is being ushered in by the Space Age, is primarily a technological change. In order to produce a stable society, any changes in technology must be accompanied a corresponding change in the supporting ideals and norms. Today, the new advances in technology are far in advance of the ideologies supporting them. As a result, our ideals and norms must undergo a re-evaluating process to align and support the improved technologies developed over recent years. This, then, is the dilemma faced by educators in this period of rapid change,--whether to continue to transmit the values of an old society, or attempt to produce the individual that may be required in a cultural phase yet to be born.

Manitoba has made great strides in recent years in providing the type of education demanded by rapidly changing conditions--both technical and ideological. Although education planners should adapt the schools quickly and effectively to changed circumstances and needs, the decision to do so must always be in the nature of a compromise, since, in a democracy, public opinion ultimately determines what is done in schools. Unless the public can be convinced, no plan can prevail. This fact very seriously curtails rapid adjustment of education to social changes, and finally determines the trends in educational growth and development.

The following observable educational trends were recorded in 1958 by W. H. Swift, Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of Alberta, from a questionnaire circulated amongst the educational

leaders:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) A greater concern for the so-called spiritual values.
- (2) A heightened interest in the formal content of education especially mathematics and science.
- (3) A concern for the sociological aspects of education.
- (4) An increased amount of study of educational problems by the layman.
- (5) An increased concern for individual differences.
- (6) Organization for educational research.
- (7) The establishment of teacher training on the campus.
- (8) The changing role of the Inspector.
- (9) The changing role of the Principal.

An examination of these trends will reveal that the Province of Manitoba has not lagged in recent years in fulfilling the expectations of educational leaders.

#### I. THE MANITOBA ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

The Evergreen School Division was incorporated as a result of recommendations contained in the Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education submitted to His Honour, the Honourable John Stewart McDiarmid, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba on November 30, 1959.<sup>2</sup>

The members appointed to the commission were: Dr. R. O. MacFarlane, Brother J. H. Bruns, Mr. J. A. Cuddy, Mr. S. Hanson, and

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<sup>1</sup>W. H. Swift, Trends in Canadian Education.

<sup>2</sup>Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education, 1959.  
R. S. Evans, Queen's Printer for Manitoba. p. xi.

Mrs. H. Wood. Dr. R. O. McFarlane was appointed chairman of the group. From the date of their appointment on May 15, 1957, until the submission of the Report, more than one hundred and twenty briefs were presented at public hearings, and, in addition, over sixty written memoranda were received and examined.<sup>3</sup>

The terms of reference required that the committee study and report on all aspects of education in Manitoba. In particular it was to make recommendations for needed changes in the following: (1) administration, (2) finance, (3) buildings and equipment, (4) curriculum and standards, (5) supply training, certification, and terms of employment of teachers, (6) inspection and field services, (7) special groups, such as blind, deaf, physically and mentally handicapped, (8) special services such as audio-visual, library, correspondence, (9) scholarships and bursaries, (10) official trustee and special schools, (11) school attendance and its enforcement, (12) advisory and statutory boards and committees.<sup>4</sup> Their recommendations were to touch on virtually every aspect of education in the province. The implementation of proposed changes necessitated a radical departure from the established mode of administration introduced by the early settlers from Ontario, to one more realistically adapted to present day conditions in the province.

Administrative changes, and in particular, the incorporation of

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. ix.

larger school areas, were to launch the province into a new era for education. Some of the advantages to be derived from the establishment of larger areas of school administration are listed in the Report as follows:<sup>5</sup>

- (a) Adequate secondary facilities can only be provided if the number of pupils in attendance is large enough to justify a diversified secondary school programme.
- (b) The increasing cost of education can be met more equitably only by a wider degree of equalization to offset the great inequalities in the assessment of existing school districts.
- (c) Improved transportation has made it more practical to assemble in large attendance units a sufficient number of pupils to utilize more efficient and better instructional facilities.
- (d) Improved administrative practices such as central purchasing and the employment of a full-time secretary become economically possible.
- (e) Special services in such fields as supervision, visual-education, music, and library can be provided more economically than can be done for a single small unit.
- (f) Competent teachers can more readily be obtained and retained.

Some of the disadvantages listed in the Report are:<sup>6</sup>

- (a) Higher taxes, particularly on high assessed land and in school districts with a high assessment per teacher as a result of the equalization of the local share of taxation for school purposes, and of the higher costs of improved services.
- (b) Fear of the loss of local autonomy. It is felt that the local school board is a corner stone of our democracy and the local school board the centre of the community. The loss of either of these is regarded as unfortunate.
- (c) Among local communities there have been some conflicts of

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. pp. 22-23.

interest which make such problems as the selection of the secondary site difficult to solve.

- (d) Some racial and religious minorities have felt that the rights and privileges they now enjoy would be endangered if the local unit of administration were enlarged.
- (e) There has been some concern over possible difficulties arising from transportation over what are regarded as long distance.

One of the first acts taken by the Minister of Education to implement the recommended changes was to appoint members to a School Division Boundaries Commission. The task set before this commission was to divide the province into fifty or sixty larger areas of administration. Numerous meetings were held throughout the province to acquaint the public with the merits of the proposed changes and to promote their adoption. To this end, many members of the Legislature and of the Department of Education worked unceasingly. The local school inspectors frequently acted as chairmen for the area meetings, in addition to being available for consultation and carrying out the regular school inspections.

## II. EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION

Evergreen School Division No. 22, came into existence as the result of a referendum held in March, 1959.<sup>7</sup> The trustees elected to the first Evergreen Division Board were: Mr. S. Wopnford, Arborg; Mr. A. Kasupski, Gimli; Dr. A. B. Ingimundson, Gimli; Mr. K. Thorarinson, Riverton; Mr. J. Werbenuk, Frazerwood; Mr. P. Zaboroski, Winnipeg Beach;

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<sup>7</sup>The Milestone, (Yearbook of the Gimli Collegiate Institute) 1958-59. p. 6.

and Mr. R. L. Peaker, Riverton, As the Secretary-Treasurer. There were a total of six trustees--one trustee each from wards 1, 2, 3, and 5; and two trustees from ward 4.

The office of the Evergreen Division Board is located in the Gimli Composite High School. Adjacent to it is the Board Meeting Room. Mr. R. L. Peaker, the Secretary-Treasurer, is employed full time by the Board.

Shortly after taking office, the trustees held numerous meetings to organize and decide upon the type and location of each secondary school in the Division. Before the end of the year, they had conducted a survey to determine the expected high school enrolment in each centre; considered the problem of supplies, accommodation, and teaching staffs; and completed the negotiation of a salary schedule with the secondary school teachers in the school division.

The salary schedule adopted exceeded the expectations of the teachers. It was designed to restore the prestige of the teachers in the district; halt the exodus of teachers to other provinces; and enable the school board to recruit young teachers and retain the more experienced ones already in the Division. While the salary levels in the Evergreen School Division followed the provincial trends, the schedule failed to accomplish the commonly accepted goal of recruiting fully-qualified and experienced teachers, because it lacked a full-placement clause for experience secured outside the Division. Despite numerous attempts by the teachers as members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society to have the restriction removed, this clause, which not only restricts the lateral

but also the vertical mobility of the experienced and qualified teacher, remained unaltered until the spring of 1964.

### III. DIVISION SCHOOLS

Secondary schools. It was decided by the Division Board, after holding meetings with the ratepayers, that the erection of three secondary schools could best serve the needs of the Division and provide for maximum efficiency in the transportation of students. Gimli, Arborg, and Riverton, were selected as the sites for the new secondary schools. Classes began in the Fall of 1961.

1. Gimli Composite High School. The composite high school erected at Gimli contained eighteen classrooms with spacious and well stocked Physics and Chemistry rooms, and a large auditorium. The school buses were kept in a large garage erected near the school building. The school facilities permitted the continuation and expansion of the Commercial course; the introduction of Industrial Arts, and Home Economics; and the addition of the General Course to the regular academic courses.

Mr. R. Buck, the principal of Gimli Collegiate Institute since the Fall of 1957, was made the Supervising Principal of Gimli Composite High School. After spending four years at the Gimli Collegiate Institute where there had always existed the problem of too many students in too few classrooms, the spacious accommodations available at the Gimli Composite High School provided a welcome change. Proud of their fine surroundings, the students and the staff worked hard to



develop a good reputation for their school.

In 1963, Mr. N. Melnychuk, a teacher on the staff, was made Assistant Principal. The establishment had grown to twenty-one classrooms and was proving too difficult for one Supervising Principal to control effectively. Difficulties in the time-tabling of classes were further complicated by the addition of a General Course in 1963. Furthermore, the necessity of instituting rigid disciplinary measures, with its resulting impersonal approach to the problems of the students, loomed as important factors to be dealt with in order to discharge effectively the responsibility of educating the young in a large establishment.

In the Spring of 1964, the Evergreen Division Board quite unexpectedly requested a meeting with the teachers as members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, to revise the salary schedule to make provision for full-placement. This had been much sought after by the teachers and was quickly accepted. At about the same time, without an advertisement that a vacancy existed in the Gimli Composite High School, Mr. R. Buck stepped down from his position as Supervising Principal to take from Mr. N. Melnychuk the position of Assistant-Principal. Mr. N. Melnychuk reverted to his former role as teacher on the staff. This allowed for the engagement of the local School Inspector, Mr. J.H. Menzies, as Supervising-Principal.

With a full-placement clause in the salary schedule, and a new Supervising-Principal, the Evergreen Division Board authorized Mr. J. H. Menzies, Mr. Harvey Benson, Principal of Arborg Collegiate, and

Mr. R. L. Peaker, to interview prospective graduates with the view of securing their services for the 1964-65 school year.<sup>8</sup> Three extra teachers were required in addition to filling the vacancies on the staff.

Secondary school enrolment has shown a marked increase since the formation of the Evergreen School Division. The variety of courses offered at the Gimli Composite High School has attracted and retained many students. The prospect of immediate employment for the graduates of the Commercial Course has made this department the second largest outside of metropolitan Winnipeg.

In May, 1965, the Supervising Principal, Assistant Principal and nine members of the staff resigned. Mr. Harvey Benson, was appointed Supervising Principal and Mr. N. Melnychuk as his assistant for the 1965-66 school year.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. J. H. Menzies was transferred to Hanover School Division No. 15 to resume his duties as Inspector of Schools.

2. Arborg Collegiate. In 1961, Mr. Harvey Benson was engaged as principal of the six-room collegiate at Arborg. He has been a strict disciplinarian and his devotion to duty has been rewarded by the Division Board with his appointment as Supervising-Principal of the Gimli Composite High School commencing in September 1965.

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<sup>8</sup>Supplied by Mr. Allan Sargeant in an interview June, 1964.

<sup>9</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 22, May 28, 1965. p. 4.

Since the formation of the Evergreen School Division in 1959, the village of Arborg has witnessed a steady increase in population enabling it to become incorporated as a town in 1963. The collegiate has reflected this growth. In 1963, a money by-law for an addition to the Arborg Collegiate was voted down. During the following school year two classrooms had to be rented in a building across from the school. On October 28, 1964, a money referendum was passed authorizing the Division Board to spend \$93,000. for an addition of six rooms to the Arborg Collegiate.<sup>10</sup>

3. Riverton Collegiate. In the Fall of 1961, Mr. Peter Onysko was made the principal of Riverton Collegiate. Mr. Peter Onysko has been principal of the Riverton School since 1944 and had proved himself one of the best teachers and principals in the Division.

The Riverton Collegiate, like that at Arborg, is a six-room building with a large auditorium.

In the Spring of 1964, Mr. Peter Onysko and most of his staff, resigned. Mr. Abe Freison has replaced him as principal.

Elementary schools. Recent changes announced by the Department of Education and contained in the Mitchener Report to the Legislature include administrative changes for the elementary schools in the Division. If the proposals come into effect, the changes could mean a reduction in the number of elementary schools with further consolidation.

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<sup>10</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 6, No. 54, October 16, 1964. p. 4.

The most radical change calls for the elementary school districts to give up their right to tax the residents in the Division. If this happens, the Evergreen Division Board will also take over the responsibility for raising taxes to finance the elementary schools.

In the drive towards the consolidation of elementary schools in the Evergreen Division, the Department of Education provided speakers to acquaint the residents of the merits of the plan. On April 2, 1965, Mr. Robert Bend addressed a group of about one hundred interested parents at Vidir Hall. Similar meetings were held at Silver, April 12; Arborg, April, 15;<sup>11</sup> and Riverton, June 21.<sup>12</sup> The Honourable George Johnson, along with Mr. R. Bend, spoke at the Arborg meeting. After the meeting held in Riverton, the group voted one hundred per cent in favour of the consolidation of Riverton School District No. 587 with other interested districts. The school districts surrounding Riverton are, at present, in the process of voting for or against consolidation. Present trends indicate that the majority of the school districts will favour consolidation with Riverton.

A meeting was held at Winnipeg Beach on June 28 to discuss consolidation. Mr. Robert Bend and Mr. C. Bridle, representatives of the Department of Education, addressed the group of trustees representing the school districts of Whytewold, Prout, Foley, Kjarna, and Winnipeg Beach. It was proposed to hold the first public meeting at Winnipeg Beach on July 12, to vote on a resolution for consolidation.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 15, April 9, 1965. p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 27, July 2, 1965. p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Lake Centre News, Vol. 5, No. 27, July 2, 1965. p. 1.

Should the present trend towards consolidation of the elementary schools continue, the one-room rural school will soon become a thing of the past. As each school closes its doors for the last time, it helps to bring to an end the era of pioneer settlement within each school district and the first phase of the growth and development of education in the Evergreen School Division.

As Canada approaches the centennial year and the schools of Manitoba accept and adjust to the challenge of education ushered in by the Space Age, the histories of the many one-room rural schools now preserved in this thesis, may, within a few years, serve as our only connection with the past to recall the once familiar sight of the "little red school-house".

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APPENDIX

## JOHN TAYLOR

(Excerpt from "Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi" by Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson. Vol. 11. p. 289 as translated by Miss S. Stefansson)

John Taylor was born in Bridgetown in Barbados in the West Indies, 1812. His father was Richard Taylor, a quartermaster there, and for many years in the Board of Admiralty, the son of George Taylor, a sea-captain from Bristol in England, who perished with his ship and the entire crew out on the ocean. John Taylor received an excellent education at home in his youth and attended the Latin school (grammar school?) in Bridgetown. However, there are two conflicting accounts of his university education. One source says that he studied at the University (college?) of Halifax in Nova Scotia (cf. Syrpa), the other, that he attended Oxford in England (cf. Morgunbladid). It is possible that he attended both of these to some extent, and among other things it is said that he studied theology at both, although he was never ordained. It is certain that he had resided both in Canada and in England before he moved permanently to Canada. It is also mentioned (probably according to Fru Susie Briem, his niece and adopted daughter) that at the University of Oxford John Taylor was a fellow-student and close friend of the man who was minister of the interior in Canada in 1875, when the Icelanders most needed aid from the highest authorities so that they could move from Ontario to New Iceland.

In the year 1848 his father Richard resigned from his post and moved with his family to Kingston in Ontario. John Taylor taught for a while in a college there. He married on December 27, 1850. His wife

Elizabeth, born in 1825, was intelligent, well-educated and refined in manner, as was her husband. Her father was a factory owner from Birmingham in England, who had moved to Kingston in Canada in 1841. He and his wife were both very devout. It is especially said of Elizabeth that she belonged to a Baptist sect, and worked very much for her church, especially after her husband's death (1884). Some time after his marriage John Taylor, ceased teaching. He then set up a store in the town of Peterborough in association with his brother-in-law. In the year 1865, he abandoned his trade, and then entered the service of the British-Canadian Bible Society. He was engaged in this occupation when he first met the Icelanders in Kinmount. (References: Eggert Briem from Videy, Sisie Briem, Morgunbladid, Aettir Skagfirdinga, Syrpa).

#### HOW JOHN TAYLOR MET THE ICELANDIC IMMIGRANTS

P. 289, Vol. 11:

Then there stepped out on the stage at Kinmount the British John Taylor, who changed the fate of the Icelandic people more than any other man in the early period of their history in America.

The first incentive for John Taylor's searching out the Icelanders in Kinmount is said to have come from his niece Carrie who later married Sigurdur Kristofersson. She was the daughter of William Stewart Taylor, a house builder and later a farmer in the Argyle District, who at that time resided in the town of Lansing, Michigan. She was on a trip north to visit her uncle and her two sisters, Susie, whom Halldor Briem had married, and Jane Hearn (later in Toronto). They were brought up by

John Taylor and his wife, who then lived forty-fifty miles north of Kinmount, where the Icelanders had recently settled. They were considered a great novelty, and there was much talk about them. Carrie heard much conversation there about these new immigrants from the "Land of Ice", and she even caught a glimpse of an Icelandic woman, whom she apparently liked.

When she came north to her uncle, she told him about the Icelanders. She gave a favourable account of them, and presumably told him of their distress, as it had been described to her. At this time John Taylor was in the service of the British-Canadian Bible Society, and mainly directed this Christian relief service among the lumberjacks (Shanty-men's Mission) in the districts north of Peterborough, and lived in the Dysart community in Haliburton county. But, since Christian relief work was his occupation, and he himself was an exceptionally kind and good man, he was filled with great sympathy for these destitute foreigners and wanted to become personally acquainted with their circumstances. Shortly before the end of the year, 1874, he undertook a trip to Kinmount. There he talked with Sigtryggur Jonasson, who informed him in various ways about the Icelanders and their condition. Sigtryggur then accompanied him to where they lived in the barracks (six temporary sheds, two 70 to 20 and four 35 by 20 ft. erected for the Icelanders) near the village. John Taylor talked with many of them and questioned them closely while Sigtryggur interpreted. He liked the people very much, and wanted with all his heart to be of assistance to them. But he was unfavourably impressed with their accommodation, and the lack of

space. The first thing he did was to demand of the railway company for whom the Icelanders worked to enlarge their living quarters, for he considered them intolerable. The result was that this was done. As will later be told, he worked in every way for the prosperity and welfare of the Icelanders.

## HOW GIMLI RECEIVED ITS NAME

(An article written by John K. Laxdal on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of Gimli.)

Origin of the name: Norse mythology predicted Ragnarok, the Twilight of Doom of Gods--an irresistable fate destroying the gods of the world, with a lapsing of all created thing into chaos. Afterward there would arise a new heaven and a new earth, on which good men would dwell in an eternity of plenty and peace. A supreme God, above all the Aesir (heathen gods) would reveal himself and rule for all eternity, and the blessed would dwell in Gimle (Gimli), in a hall fairer than the sun, the highest abode of light.

Meaning of the name: This is disputed. Some consider that it means the great hall of heaven, whither the righteous will go to spend all eternity.

Others take it as originating from two words: Gim-fire and hle-lee, and meaning a shelter from fire; they also take it to mean the place where the hall of heaven was located--i.e. the new world itself, not the hall.

In any sense, it apparently means a heavenly abode, the home of the blessed, and a place of peace.

Choice of the name: It is said that when the colonists of New Iceland had to send out written records concerning their settlement, to the government, John Taylor, the deputy of the Canadian Government in the colony, and the good angel of the settlers, came to two prominent

men among them saying that he could not send letters, from a nameless location, and requesting them to give the site of the town a name. The two Fridjon Fridriksson, a merchant, and Jakob Jonsson, went to confer with Olaf Olafsson of Espiholi (now site of Arnasson's Dairy), concerning the name. Call the town Gimli, he said, and they all agreed to that. (Apparently the name reflected the longing of the colonists for a refuge which might be to them a haven of peace and plenty.)



## EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION

School District Number	Name of School	Date Formed
585 . . . . .	Gimli . . . . .	June 6, 1889
586 . . . . .	Arnes . . . . .	June 6, 1889
587 . . . . .	Riverton . . . . .	June 6, 1889
588 . . . . .	Hnausa . . . . .	June 6, 1889
589 . . . . .	Big Island . . . . .	June 6, 1889
647 . . . . .	Kjarna . . . . .	April 11, 1891
776 . . . . .	Geysir . . . . .	April 16, 1894
1045 . . . . .	Minerva . . . . .	January 2, 1900
1054 . . . . .	Arnes South . . . . .	February 2, 1900
1096 . . . . .	Felsendorf . . . . .	January 2, 1901
1125 . . . . .	Foley . . . . .	June 25, 1901
1138 . . . . .	Willow Creek . . . . .	June 25, 1901
1211 . . . . .	Laufas . . . . .	January 6, 1903
1291 . . . . .	King Edward . . . . .	June 3, 1904
1292 . . . . .	Ardal . . . . .	June 3, 1904
1293 . . . . .	Framnes . . . . .	June 3, 1904
1295 . . . . .	Melnice . . . . .	June 4, 1904
1331 . . . . .	Winnipeg Beach . . . . .	March 4, 1905
1363 . . . . .	Sandridge . . . . .	March 29, 1906
1386 . . . . .	Whytefold Beach . . . . .	June 2, 1906
1460 . . . . .	Vidir . . . . .	May 6, 1908
1461 . . . . .	Bjarmi . . . . .	May 6, 1908

School District Number	Name of School	Date Formed
1463 . . . . .	.Dnister . . . . .	June 19, 1908
1481 . . . . .	.Bradbury . . . . .	February 15, 1909
1482 . . . . .	.Berlo . . . . .	February 15, 1909
1491 . . . . .	.Park . . . . .	April 1, 1909
1570 . . . . .	.Rembrandt . . . . .	March 30, 1911
1649 . . . . .	.Jaroslaw . . . . .	January 7, 1913
1653 . . . . .	.Malonton . . . . .	February 17, 1913
1665 . . . . .	.Meleb . . . . .	February 20, 1913
1666 . . . . .	.Frazerwood . . . . .	February 20, 1913
1669 . . . . .	.Vestri . . . . .	March 8, 1913
1676 . . . . .	.Fyrer . . . . .	April 30, 1913
1684 . . . . .	.Lowland . . . . .	June 14, 1913
1722 . . . . .	.Woodglen . . . . .	February 4, 1914
1741 . . . . .	.Tarno . . . . .	March 3, 1914
1773 . . . . .	.Rosenberg . . . . .	February 3, 1915
1788 . . . . .	.Hayek . . . . .	April 29, 1915
1789 . . . . .	.Okno . . . . .	April 29, 1915
1791 . . . . .	.Sambor . . . . .	April 27, 1915
1821 . . . . .	.Prout . . . . .	March 27, 1916
1831 . . . . .	.Shorncliffe . . . . .	June 5, 1916
1842 . . . . .	.Three Sisters . . . . .	September 1, 1916
1853 . . . . .	.Hastings . . . . .	February 5, 1917
1865 . . . . .	.Devonshire . . . . .	March 24, 1917

School District Number	Name of School	Date Formed
1886 . . . . .	Cavendish . . . . .	March 26, 1917
2012 . . . . .	Adam . . . . .	October 20, 1919
2020 . . . . .	Morweena . . . . .	January 6, 1920
2060 . . . . .	Washow Bay. . . . .	March 26, 1921
2076 . . . . .	Cumming . . . . .	April 7, 1921
2078 . . . . .	Homer . . . . .	July 3, 1921
2105 . . . . .	Island . . . . .	June 5, 1923
2106 . . . . .	New Valley. . . . .	June 5, 1923
2115 . . . . .	Progress . . . . .	October 6, 1924
2225 . . . . .	Finns . . . . .	September 2, 1930
2282 . . . . .	Lilac . . . . .	May 18, 1937
2337 . . . . .	Goulding. . . . .	August 11, 1952
2341 . . . . .	Mennville . . . . .	June 13, 1952
2343 . . . . .	Grund . . . . .	January 2, 1953

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SECRETARY-TREASURERS  
IN THE EVERGREEN DIVISION

1963 - 1964

No.	SCHOOL DISTRICT	NAME OF SEC-TREAS	P.O. ADDRESS
585	Gimli	John Haas	Gimli
586	Arnes	Mrs. Shirley Marks	Arnes
587	Riverton	W. J. Cairns	Riverton
588	Hnausa	Mrs. E. S. Einarson	Hnausa
589	Big Island	E. J. Solmundson	Hecla
647	Kjarna	Mrs. N. Isfeld	Husavick
776	Geysir	C. K. Oddson	Arborg
1045	Minerva	H. Benedictson	Gimli
1054	Arnes South	Thoreen Helgason	Arnes
1096	Felsendorf	John Shmata	Frazerwood
1125	Foley	A. Wishnowski	Komarno
1138	Willow Creek	V. J. Wlosek	Gimli
1211	Laufas	Steinni Palson	Riverton
1291	King Edward	A. Gottfried	Camp Morton
1292	Ardal	Zado Zator	Arborg
1293	Framnes	S. Wopnford	Arborg
1295	Melnice	M. Ellison	Petersfield
1331	Winnipeg Beach	Mary W. Sawyer	Winnipeg Beach
1363	Sandridge	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
1386	Whytewold Beach	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
1460	Vidir	H. S. Holm	Vidir

No.	SCHOOL DISTRICT	NAME OF SEC-TREAS	P.O. ADDRESS
1461	Bjarmi	W. Firman	Arborg
1463	Dnister	Bill Bohonos	Gimli
1481	Bradbury	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
1482	Berlo	Stanley Marks	Berlo
1491	Park	M. J. Dwernik	Meleb
1570	Rembrandt	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
1649	Jaroslaw	Joe Orzech	Jaroslaw
1653	Malonton	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
1665	Meleb	S. Pidborchynski	Meleb
1666	Frazerwood	Harry Murawka	Frazerwood
1669	Vestri	R. R. Johnson	Arborg
1676	Fyrer	J. F. Palamarchuk	Silver
1684	Lowland	Alfred Thompson	Arborg
1722	Woodglen	C. F. Friesen	Riverton
1741	Tarno	John Buchko	Ledwyn
1773	Rosenburg	Mrs. M. Chomkovski	Arborg
1788	Hayek	Walter Wawruch	Arborg
1789	Okno	Steve Deneka	Arborg
1791	Sambor	William Woychuk	Sky Lake
1821	Prout	William Korolyk	Winnipeg Beach
1831	Shorncliffe	Steve Petrachek	Shorncliffe
1842	Three Sisters	Fred Ulrich	Frazerwood
1853	Hastings	Louis Osioway	Silver
1865	Devonshire	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.

No.	SCHOOL DISTRICT	NAME OF SEC-TREAS	P.O. ADDRESS
1866	Cavendish	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
2012	Adam	Mrs. Marie Blahey	Sky Lake
2020	Morweena	Steve Shactay	Arborg
2060	Washow Bay	J. A. Cameron	116 Edmonton St. Wpg.
2076	Cumming	Anton Roselowich	Meleb
2078	Homer	William Weik	Arborg
2105	Island	N. Fridfinnson	Arborg
2106	New Valley	Paul Golas	Arborg
2115	Progress	Andrew Sutyla	Riverton
2225	Finns	Joe Orzech	Jaroslaw
2282	Lilac	Joe Malinowski	Gimli
2337	Goulding	S/L Sherwood	R.C.A.F. Stn. Gimli
2341	Mennville	F. D. Reimer	Washow Bay
2243	Grund	Helgi Jones	Hecla

## EVERGREEN DIVISION ASSOCIATION NO. 22

## LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

1961

## ARBORG

Arborg Collegiate  
 Ardal  
 Bjarmi  
 Framnes  
 Geysir  
 Hayek  
 Island  
 Laufas  
 Vestri  
 Vidir  
 Lowland  
 Morweena  
 Adam  
 Hastings

## GIMLI

Gimli Collegiate  
 Arnes North  
 Arnes South  
 Berlo  
 Dnister  
 Foley  
 Gimli  
 King Edward #1  
 King Edward #2  
 Kjarna  
 Lilac  
 Melnice  
 Prout  
 Winnipeg Beach  
 Whytewold Beach  
 Bradbury  
 Cavendish  
 Devonshire  
 Frazerwood  
 Malonton (South)  
 Meleb  
 Park  
 Rembrandt  
 Willow Creek  
 Goulding

## RIVERTON

Big Island  
 Riverton Collegiate  
 Finns  
 Hnaua  
 Jaroslaw  
 Tarno  
 Homer  
 Riverton  
 Mennville  
 Okno  
 Progress  
 Shorncliffe  
 Woodglen