

LOCAL AUTONOMY AND MUNICIPAL REORGANIZATION:
A STUDY OF ETHNIC INFLUENCE ON THE
LOCAL POLITICS OF ST. BONIFACE

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ABSTRACT

The reorganization of municipal government becomes more necessary as urbanization increases but the necessity for reorganization does not prevent local opposition to new forms of municipal government. In urban areas outside of Greater Winnipeg, reorganization has been prevented by political opposition that is active and well organized because it is based on the residents' strong identification with the locality and its civic institutions. As ethnic groups are usually a minority in a provincial, state or national political system, such groups tend to identify with a locality and its political institutions because the ethnic group can hope to be a majority within a locality and thereby control or influence civic institutions. Although the French in St. Boniface are an ethnic minority, they have made little attempt to retain control of civic institutions. This lack of identity is explained by the historical development of French political organization and in the relationship between the municipality and the provincial government.

As there have been few studies of local politics in the Winnipeg urban area, this analysis of French political organization has required an examination of several areas of local politics. Although municipal reorganization became a significant issue during the 1950's, the political organization

of the French during this decade cannot be explained without study of early provincial-municipal relationships, of the first municipal reorganization undertaken on the initiative of local groups, and of municipal and provincial elections in St. Boniface.

From this analysis it becomes evident that French political organization was not identified either with the locality of St. Boniface or with civic institutions. What appeared as a well organized politically active ethnic group, was neither organized nor active in the local politics of St. Boniface because ethnic groups were predominantly rural in membership and focussed on the provincial issue of education.

PREFACE

This thesis examines why the French in St. Boniface accepted a metropolitan form of government in 1960. The explanation does not lie in the political events of the 1950's, when metropolitan government became a salient political issue, but in the history of the legal and administrative relationships between the provincial government and the municipalities and in the influence of ethnic autonomy on the politics of St. Boniface. When Manitoba was created in 1870, the only effective administration in the area was the provincial government and it had to assume the functions normally performed by municipal administration. As municipal institutions were established, the provincial government became less involved in the actual administrations of municipal affairs. This change in administration might have shifted the political attention of the French from provincial to municipal institutions but this did not happen because of the school question. Educational policy was determined by the provincial government and the attention of the French in Manitoba was riveted to that policy and consequently to provincial politics by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

The political activity over the provincial government's educational policy distracted the French from the policies of local administration and deterred political activity over local issues. The intense feeling aroused over

educational policy by the Roman Catholic hierarchy caused the organization of political groups which brought pressure on the provincial government to restore Roman Catholic rights in education abolished in 1890. When this political activity did not result in complete restoration of religious rights in education, political groups alined with the party in power to secure lenient administration of the school act. A change in the party in power and the introduction of more restrictions on French rights in the schools led to the formation of political groups that tried to protect the remaining rights of the French. These groups were always concerned with the provincial issue of education rather than the issues of civic politics. Over the years from 1890 these groups concerned with education defined the autonomy of the French. As these groups drew their membership from the French community in Manitoba, this autonomy was identified with a region rather than St. Boniface, with ethnicity, religion and education rather than the municipal council, and with provincial rather than local politics.

The criticisms of the text of this study made by Professor M. S. Donnelly helped to make the thesis more coherent than it would have been and his patience, along with that of other people, made it possible to complete the work.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD OF EXAMINING LOCAL AUTONOMY

The constant migration of rural people to the cities, the spread of urban areas, and the increased demand and need for public services, have made reorganization of municipal government necessary for effective administration of municipal and inter-municipal affairs. Opposed to municipal reorganization, however, are those who believe that the government closest to the people is the best form of government even if it cannot provide efficient administration, an adequate level of public services or cope with inter-municipal problems. This belief in local control is rooted in the liberal democratic tradition. The type of local government that grew out of this tradition did not seem as inadequate in the early 1900's as it has become since the automobile has made possible the extensive spread of urban areas. Technological innovation, the development of industrial capitalism, more equitable distribution of national income, the belief in the need of a separate house for every family, and the post-war housing boom have made local control of small municipalities difficult to justify in terms of liberal democracy. Economic and social developments are forcing changes in the size, functions and source of popular

control of municipal government. But these structural changes have been difficult to introduce, particularly in the United States where the development of industrial capitalism produced, along with more automobiles, a middle class desire for greater opportunity for the "little" man. This desire was one basis of the attempts of the progressive movement to secure greater opportunity in politics by separating municipal government from the control of state government dominated by corrupt politicians linked to the great industrial and corporate interests. This was "home rule" symbolizing not only the separation of the city from the state and control of municipal government by local residents but the virtues of democracy.

Where "home rule" can be invoked because it has become a symbol of municipal independence and the purity of democracy, proposals for municipal reorganization have often been defeated or so modified that the new structure of municipal government has been either ineffective or dependent on dynamic leadership for dealing with the problems of urbanization. "Home rule" has been used to rally opposition to municipal reorganization by groups with a special interest in preserving local control. These groups have practical objectives such as keeping down tax rates, retaining local taxes for expenditure within the municipality, perpetuating a particular land use pattern or maintaining residential

segregation. A group that might invoke "home rule" in order to oppose municipal reorganization, is the group united by an ethnic origin common to its members. The ethnic minority has more reason than most local groups to identify with the institutions of local government and oppose reorganization. An ethnic group can often influence some aspects of municipal government by controlling a ward and electing an ethnic representative whereas in a larger unit of municipal government they might be deprived of such ethnic representation. For the ethnic group the independence of a local council is more than a symbol of abstract notions about democracy to be used for practical objectives: it is often the symbol as well as the means of ethnic survival.

In the survival of the French as an ethnic group lies the justification of this study of local politics and municipal reorganization. This study attempts to reveal the effect of the school question, which was closely related to provincial politics, on the political organization of the French in St. Boniface. The school question created some differences between French and English local politics and these offer some basis for an explanation of why an ethnically distinct group became partly integrated, at least in terms of local government and elections, in a larger political unit.

As these differences are related through the school

question to the Roman Catholic hierarchy and to provincial politics, the study exposes some aspects of the influence of party on civic affairs--an influence often ignored because of the hiatus in party politics between the early 1920's and mid-1950's. As the French, under the leadership of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, became emotionally committed to the preservation of religious and ethnic rights in education, they became more involved in provincial politics and less concerned with local politics. This pattern of political behavior differed from that of other ethnic groups which tended to be more concerned with local politics than the French, and is attributable, in part, to the organization of Canadian parties. Provincial and federal party personnel, are the central figures in organizing Canadian parties rather than the leaders of the local community. This has tended to weaken the position of local community leadership amongst the French in St. Boniface.

Weak local community leadership amongst the French is not what might be expected for the following reasons summarized by Peter Rossi.¹ He has pointed out that

¹ "Social Change and Social Structure in the American Local Community", Regional Development and the Wabash Basin, Ronald R. Boyce, editor (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), pp. 114-116.

"religion and ethnicity...have been the most enduring lines of political cleavage" and "most resistant to change" because they are "directly connected to the family unit." Political issues must be interpreted in "terms which will engage a particular line of cleavage." This interpretation is often made by local leaders "who have achieved positions of leadership within regions or communities on the basis of their being embedded in the interpersonal networks of their localities." "It is precisely" because these leaders are embedded in the community that makes them "sensitive to local interests and therefore more likely to see losses to particular individuals than the gain to the total community." Dr. Rossi relates "the family as a primary focus of individual loyalty" to "the social structure of the local community."

The link is that for some groups the identification between family and local community is strong, and some primary bonds attached to the family are generalized to include the locality as well. This is particularly the case for those whose historical ties to an area are strong....²

Such family ties, local leadership and identity with locality are the very factors that would be expected amongst the French in St. Boniface, particularly as they at one time controlled the civic institutions of the area. This

² Ibid., p. 116. Emphasis added.

study establishes, however, that French local leadership in civic affairs was weak and that there was little identity between ethnic feeling and locality.

Some of the differences between French and other ethnic groups can be seen in comparisons of voter turnout. Other ethnic groups in the Winnipeg area and in urban areas in the United States have high turnouts for local elections whereas the French in St. Boniface have a low turnout. Some studies of American ethnic groups, for example, have shown that the ethnic tends to vote more frequently in local than in state or national elections.³

Weak local leadership and the absence of strong identity of ethnic feeling with locality and the institutions of local government were the result of the leadership of the Roman Catholic hierarchy which was instrumental in organizing ethnic political activity and directing it not toward civic issues but toward provincial educational policy and provincial politics. For the French the symbol of ethnic survival was not the city council or "home rule" but education.

The development of this thesis is based on the assumption that political groups mediate the political acts

³ See Robert E. Lane, Political Life (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1954), p. 239 and the references cited there.

of individuals.⁴ The thesis, however, is not concerned with proving or validating or even describing a "group basis of politics" but with analyzing the effect of ethnic feeling on French local politics. The use of groups enables an analytic distinction to be made between French and English and between French ethnic and French local groups. The distinction becomes apparent through a series of comparisons between the French and the English considered as voting groups or as organized groups active or inactive about particular issues. Thus, if the vote in a ward with a heavy concentration of French is compared with the vote in a ward which is predominantly English, differences in voting behavior become apparent. When these comparisons of ward voting are considered along with the vote in provincial elections and with organized group activity, such as that of l'Association d'Education and the Norwood Ratepayers Association, representative of French and English political activity, the distinctions between ethnic and local groups can be delineated. It is this political activity, epitomized by specific groups, that is used to define the territorial area most important to the French. The differences between ethnic and local autonomy, therefore, are differences in the area from which the group membership

⁴ Ibid., p. 174.

is drawn as well as in the objectives and symbols of political activity. As the feeling of autonomy becomes stronger, group activity increases, group organization becomes more distinct, political objectives become more clearly defined and commitment to a symbol becomes more evident.

The definition of autonomy by political groups active in provincial politics and organized on a regional basis is more clearly revealed by a comparative study than by a one-sided description of the activity or lack of activity of French groups. The group organization and political activity of the English in Winnipeg and in St. Boniface, therefore, is compared with that of the French. After outlining the provincial-municipal relationships, Chapter II makes some comparisons, Chapter III compares political activity over a major inter-municipal issue, and Chapter IV compares political activity in the local politics of St. Boniface.

The differences in the political activity and group organization in local politics resulted from French identification, with provincial politics, provincial educational policy and provincial parties, all of which are examined in Chapter V. This chapter determines the pattern of French local politics and Chapters VI and VII examine how this pattern determined why the French scarcely opposed municipal reorganization in the fifties and why they

accepted metropolitan government in 1960.

After examining how the Metropolitan Winnipeg Act reduced the functional autonomy of the St. Boniface council and the local autonomy of the French, Chapter VIII suggests that the pattern of local politics in St. Boniface may be changing. As the French begin to see metropolitan government as a factor in future educational policy, they have begun to identify ethnic values with municipal institutions. For these institutions can be used to perpetuate ethnic values because they are susceptible to control and influence by a minority even if it cannot control and scarcely influence the political institutions of the province.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ON MUNICIPAL INDEPENDENCE AND LOCAL AUTONOMY

The development of local autonomy has been influenced by the relationships between the municipalities and the government of Manitoba. The relationships between the municipalities and the government are both legal and administrative. Some of the effects of these relationships on the development of local autonomy are indicated in this Chapter by outlining the legal competence of the provincial government in relation to municipalities and by describing the functions of the provincial government in reconciling differences between French and English and in creating and regulating municipal government. As these legal and administrative relationships did not prevent but only influenced the development of local autonomy, some of the differences in the political activity of French and English are examined to indicate the early patterns of local autonomy.

A struggle between local residents and the provincial government over a major civic issue such as "home rule" might have encouraged the development of well organized local political groups. In the first years of the province, however, the issues of local politics were submerged in the

great issues that developed between the provincial and the federal governments. "Boundaries, disallowance, the school question, natural resources...were the primary issues."⁵ The control of municipal institutions by the local residents was an issue of secondary importance to the control of provincial affairs by Manitobans.

In this political situation, created by the provincial struggle for autonomy, there were few local residents concerned about challenging the exclusive power of the province to "make Laws in relation to...Municipal Institutions in the Province."⁶ The British North America Act had established that each province was "sovereign within its constitutional powers...and charged it with the local government of its inhabitants by means of local institutions."⁷ All the terms of the British North America Act, concerning the powers of the provincial government to create municipal institutions were made applicable to the province by the Manitoba Act. By 1909 in Smith v. London, the courts confirmed the doctrine that the municipalities received

⁵ M. S. Donnelly, The Government of Manitoba (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 45.

⁶ British North America Act, 1867, Sec. 92 (8).

⁷ Lord Atkin in Ladore v. Bennett, 1939, A. C. quoted in Bora Laskin, Canadian Constitutional Law (Toronto: Carswell Company Ltd., 1951), p. 422.

whatever powers they had from the province.⁸ The result of the constitutional provisions and the decisions of the courts on cases relating to municipal-provincial relations was that municipal government developed on the basis of statute law. As all the powers of a municipality were conferred upon it by the province, there was little scope for the municipalities to prevent provincial control and regulation of municipal affairs. If the legal development of municipal government had placed the municipalities in a less inferior position in relation to the provinces, local groups would have had more opportunity to become politically active over municipal independence or "home rule".

While the legal development of municipal government hindered the activity of local groups, the municipalities nonetheless retained their political independence. In the early years of the province, however, both administrative necessity and political expediency prevented this independence from developing into political movements.

The early politics of the province required that provincial institutions be used to prevent the French and English from drifting further apart than they had been during and after the Red River Rebellion. The first Lieutenant Governor made appointments to the government and

⁸ Kenneth Grant Crawford, Municipal Government (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), p. 51.

established electoral divisions in a way that recognized the equal status of French and English. The first appointments to the Executive Council of the province acknowledged the nearly equal numbers of French and English.⁹ When cabinet government was established, representation in the cabinet was made in such a way that the religious and ethnic interests were acknowledged.¹⁰ Election to the provincial legislature was on the basis of electoral divisions which gave "due regard...to existing local divisions and population."¹¹ The Redistribution Bill of 1879 followed the parish boundaries, as had the first divisions, and provided for "eight electoral divisions within the French and Roman Catholic parishes, eight for the old English parishes, and eight for newly settled and outlying townships."¹²

After 1881 the more rapid growth of the non-French population and the completion of the square survey ended representation based primarily on ethnicity and religion. The French, however, because they were concentrated in certain areas, continued to elect ethnic and religious representatives who often became members of the provincial

⁹ M. S. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹ The Manitoba Act, 1870, Sec. 16.

¹² M. S. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 78.

cabinet. This early participation in the politics and government of the province encouraged the French to accept provincial control and regulation of municipal services and institutions.

In the years from 1870 to 1890, the close relationship between the provincial government and municipal administration prevented the development of movements for "home rule". When Manitoba was constituted a province, provincial direction of municipal services was administratively necessary as there were "few institutions of local government."¹³ The provincial government had to provide local services as well as establish a framework for municipal government. Provisions for carrying out local works was made in the Parish Assessment Act of 1871 which enabled officials to assess each family for the work if the heads of those families formally requested that the work be undertaken. An act passed in 1873 enabled the cabinet to establish municipalities in areas where two-thirds of a required number of thirty residents petitioned for the organization of a municipality. These municipalities could pass by-laws for the performance of certain public works but the by-laws were invalid without cabinet approval.¹⁴ By

¹³ Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 135.

1880 the provincial government had created municipalities and made them responsible "for the administration of local affairs."¹⁵

Despite the relative autonomy given to local areas in 1880, the close administrative relationship between the province and the municipalities continued. County governments were established by the provincial government in 1883. The county governments were to administer matters which extended beyond the boundaries of individual municipalities. When the county form of government proved impractical for sparsely settled areas without adequate communication, responsibility for "inter-municipal works"¹⁶ was transferred to the office of the Provincial Municipal Commissioner, who was empowered to order the performance of these works and to assess "the cost upon the municipalities benefited."¹⁷ The assumption of the performance of inter-municipal works by the Municipal Commissioner¹⁸ was important because it established the direct relationship between the provincial

¹⁵ Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, Report and Recommendations, Vol. I, p. 75.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁸ The Municipal Commissioner was also responsible for the administration of justice, minor social services and other miscellaneous duties.

government and municipal councils. This relationship and the existence of the office with cabinet status was the basis of a tradition of provincial governmental interference in municipal affairs.¹⁹

Although the legal and political relationships between the province and the municipalities limited the activity of local groups over some issues of municipal-provincial relations such as "home rule", the development of a sense of local political independence was not prevented. The residents of Winnipeg were sufficiently active about local affairs to petition for incorporation as a town under the act of 1873.²⁰ Residents of local municipalities had protested against the county system of government established in 1883. In the 1890's local feeling was expressed in an organized way by the residents of Elmwood, which was then a part of St. Boniface. The Elmwood residents, dissatisfied with the services provided by St. Boniface council, petitioned the provincial government for the separation of Elmwood from the town of St. Boniface and for annexation to the municipality of Kildonan. The annexation was enacted in 1895.²¹ The editorials of the

¹⁹ Kenneth Grant Crawford, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁰ Statutes of Manitoba, 1873, Chap. 24, Sec. II.

²¹ Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, op. cit., p. 81.

Manitoba Free Press, whose editor was active in such local organizations as the Board of Trade, expressed a desire to be free of the control the provincial government exercised over municipal affairs. But even the political antipathy the editor felt for the provincial government led only to sporadic demands for "home rule" and to a brief though vociferous attack on the office of the Public Utility Commissioner when it was established in 1912.²²

In St. Boniface, however, there was less evidence of local groups protesting about municipal services or the creation of provincial agencies to regulate municipal affairs. The French made no move to petition for the incorporation of St. Boniface under the Act of 1873 and the city did not receive a town charter until 1883. Even after incorporation the French made no attempt to retain control of civic government by redefining the boundaries of the city in such a way as to exclude the growing non-French population. As the non-French population of St. Boniface expanded, the French lost control of aldermanic seats and by 1924 of the office of the

²² On February 10, 1905, the Manitoba Free Press asserted that Winnipeg would "have to be allowed to work out its own salvation without paternal restraint by the Provincial Government." In 1910 an editorial headline demanded "Home Rule for Winnipeg"; May 27, 1910. In 1913 the Winnipeg solicitor read a letter to the legislative committee of Winnipeg council which suggested that the committee apply for general powers to manage its own affairs; January 13, 1913. The paper conducted a vigorous campaign against the creation of the office of the Public Utility Commissioner. On March 28, 1912, the heading of an editorial discussing this office read "Plot is Deepening: New Proposal to Throttle Winnipeg."

mayor. That the French did not attempt to retain control of municipal institutions is peculiar because it was evident by the early 1900's that these were the political institutions through which the French might perpetuate ethnic values.

The French appeared indifferent to municipal institutions even though the French community had many of the attributes of local autonomy. The French had a distinct language, religion and culture. There was a network of primary relationships extending throughout the community. The French had strong historical ties with St. Boniface and many of them had lived in the area for a long time, factors which tend to increase citizen interest in the government of a locality. In the early 1880's the French in St. Boniface were at the center of economic and commercial development. The first railway into the Winnipeg urban area, which was completed in 1878, terminated in St. Boniface. Around the railway terminal a small industrial and commercial district developed.²³ While this development was soon surpassed by Winnipeg after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway complex there in 1881, economic development was one more factor contributing to the distinctiveness of St. Boniface. But language, religion, culture, historical ties and economic growth did not encourage the development

²³ Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, op. cit., p. 45.

of French political groups concerned primarily with civic issues and municipal institutions.

The absence of French political groups focussed on civic issues and municipal institutions contrasted to the political activity and organization of the English in St. Boniface. Although a minority in St. Boniface until just before 1909, the English were active in pressing for improvements in publicly owned land and for what they believed to be more efficient municipal government. To achieve these and other civic purposes, the English tended to act as organized civic groups. It was this characteristic of their political activity that distinguished them from the French. As will become more evident as the thesis develops, the English organized political groups for action in municipal politics on a range of issues whereas the French organized political groups for action in provincial politics not for a range of issues but for influencing educational policy.

In the early 1900's the English in St. Boniface organized the Norwood Ratepayers Association. It continuously sent its representatives before St. Boniface council petitioning for such things as extensions of municipal services, and Royal Commissions to investigate alleged irregularities in the management of city council.²⁴ The

²⁴ The minutes of St. Boniface council for 1911, for

Association nominated English candidates for council, pressed for a division of the English ward and more English members on the city council. The activity of the Association did much to create a type of political activity in St. Boniface that distinguished the English from the French.

French political groups revealed little of the civic orientation and activity displayed by the English. In relation to municipal affairs, French political groups were relatively indifferent. There was, for example, little activity on the part of the French to incorporate the town as a city. Incorporation as a city in 1908 followed the growth of the English population in Norwood and seemed to result, as the Manitoba Free Press had predicted, from the "influx of new blood."²⁵

Differences in the local political activity of French and English were reflected in their attitudes toward the possibility of amalgamating St. Boniface or parts of

example, reveal that the Association appeared on March 29th to ask about the conduct of members of council over the purchase of electric power and the construction of sidewalks. On October 23rd its representatives appeared to ask for construction of a sidewalk on Horace Street. A Royal Commission of inquiry was requested by the Association on November 13th. These representations were not motivated exclusively by a desire to embarrass a council composed only of French members for in 1909 the original English ward was divided and by 1911 there were four English representatives on St. Boniface council.

²⁵ Manitoba Free Press, September 3, 1906.

St. Boniface to Winnipeg. The English in St. Boniface often referred to amalgamation with Winnipeg as a means of solving the problems of municipal politics and administration that arose under the jurisdiction of St. Boniface council. An active member of the Norwood Ratepayers Association and a school trustee suggested in 1907 that Norwood might be forced to secede from St. Boniface and join Winnipeg if the English electors did not get greater representation on St. Boniface council.²⁶ Amalgamation with Winnipeg was regarded as a means of escaping the corrupt politics of St. Boniface.²⁷ Corruption in civic affairs in St. Boniface encouraged a movement favoring annexation of St. Boniface to Winnipeg.²⁸

But the French were indifferent to these rumours of amalgamation even though ethnic pride and rivalry were involved in the charges of corruption. Many of these charges of corruption and of the need to amalgamate with Winnipeg came from members of the Norwood Ratepayers Association which was, according to an English speaking councillor elected from Norwood, motivated by ethnic prejudice.²⁹ Ethnicity, which was at the root of many of

²⁶ Manitoba Free Press, December 6, 1907.

²⁷ Ibid., October 16, 1909.

²⁸ Ibid., November 19, 1909.

²⁹ Loc. cit.

the English charges of corruption and demands for amalgamation with Winnipeg, was not the basis of French local politics.³⁰ Ethnic divisions might divide the people in provincial and national politics, but in the local politics of St. Boniface:

The question of supremacy of races or of alternating the nationality of the occupant of the mayor's chair will be fought out in a friendly spirit at the civic polling booth.³¹

It was not ethnic differences that prevented the French from accepting the amalgamation of St. Boniface and Winnipeg but "the inevitable school question."³²

While the English population expanded in the urban area around St. Boniface, and the commerce and industry of Winnipeg surpassed that of St. Boniface until it seemed that Winnipeg would engulf the French population of St. Boniface, the French remained indifferent to amalgamation and the possibility of assimilation. The Red River was no barrier to the growth of Winnipeg and St. Boniface was regarded by many Winnipeggers as a mere geographic projection "into the heart of Winnipeg."³³ But the

³⁰ For further discussion see Chapter IV.

³¹ Manitoba Free Press, September 3, 1906.

³² Ibid., November 19, 1909.

³³ Ibid., February 5, 1906.

possibility of amalgamation did not disturb the equanimity of the French.³⁴

Despite the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and for a short period, economic distinctiveness of the French people in St. Boniface, they displayed less political activity over civic issues than the English in the surrounding areas. The low level of political activity between local areas and the province can be partly explained by the legal predominance of the provincial government and the administrative necessity of provincial control and regulation of municipal activities. Local groups could not develop around important municipal issues such as "home rule" and opposition to the provincial government. Even Winnipeg, where rapid economic growth and expanding population made it the only and major urban center in Manitoba, had few people or groups opposed to the regulation of municipal affairs by the provincial government. But no matter how little local political activity there was in the predominantly English areas, there was always less in the French areas of St. Boniface. This was the emerging pattern of political activity. The French were less active in and less organized for civic affairs than were the English. It is a pattern of activity that is put into

³⁴ Ibid., September 3, 1906.

greater relief by comparing the political activity in Winnipeg and St. Boniface over a major inter-municipal issue. This issue was the formation of the Greater Winnipeg Water District which is examined in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

LOCAL POLITICS AND MUNICIPAL INTEGRATION

The formation of the Greater Winnipeg Water District was significant for local autonomy because it was the first integrative organization established on the initiative of the municipalities in the Winnipeg urban area. The origin and formation of the district reveal different patterns of local political activity. What is most revealing about these patterns is not merely that the English were more active than the French, but that the French scarcely reacted to the control which Winnipeg gained over the district. As the only other city included in the district, St. Boniface might have expected a greater measure of formal control over the operations of the district. But the French were indifferent to the fact that they were reducing the cost of supplying Winnipeg with water it had to have without themselves deriving much control over the scheme.

In Winnipeg in 1912, there were a number of organizations whose main reason for existence was the development of conditions which would enhance the business value of the city.³⁵ These groups took an active part in civic affairs

³⁵ Among these organizations were unions, represented by the Trades and Labour Council, organizations representing

and were closely identified with decisions taken by Winnipeg council.³⁶ The most influential of these organizations was the Board of Trade which sought new industries and settlers and was "more important...in the public eye than the city council."³⁷ It was the Board of Trade that formed a committee in 1906 which investigated the source and supply of water for Winnipeg and then presented the report to Winnipeg council. The council accepted the report and sought legislation to appoint a commission of the mayor, three aldermen, and three citizens to make a further study of water sources outside the city.³⁸

business, such as the Board of Trade, the Industrial Bureau, The Builders Exchange and the Manufacturers' Association and organizations which represented diverse groups but were directed at the achievement of a limited goal, such as the Winnipeg Town Planning Commission and the Land Values Taxation League. There was a clear distinction between the interests represented by some of these groups as was revealed when the Board of Trade backed an amendment to the Winnipeg Charter which would have allowed corporations and joint stock companies to vote in municipal elections and the Trades and Labour Council opposed the amendment. But these differences did not interfere with a united approach to municipal improvement.

³⁶ During 1905 the Board of Trade co-operated with Winnipeg council to further construction of a high pressure system for better fire protection, to increase the supply of water from wells drilled in the city, and to reorganize the city government an effort that resulted in the creation of the board of control. Manitoba Free Press, February 7, 1906.

³⁷ Manitoba Free Press, January 8, 1910.

³⁸ Ibid., February 7, 1906.

The commission was appointed in July 1906. After preliminary study, the chairman, J. H. Ashdown, announced at a meeting of the commission that, as no other source was suitable, the land should be surveyed between Winnipeg and Shoal Lake.³⁹ When the survey was completed the commission reported that the scheme was feasible but expensive. As the actual debt of the city at the end of 1906 was over \$13 million and the water scheme was expected to add \$3 to \$6 million, it was dropped in favour of a scheme to develop a municipal electric power system.⁴⁰

After six years of increasing population and costs for operating pumps for the wells, of difficulties in putting new wells into operation, of typhoid epidemics and of recurrent water shortages, the supply of water for Winnipeg became an issue of a mayoralty election. T. R. Deacon, president of one of the large iron foundries in Winnipeg, who had been running for alderman in Ward 3, was convinced by his supporters to run for mayor. His

³⁹ Ibid., September 20, 1906.

⁴⁰ Manitoba Free Press, December 1, 1906. Almost a year earlier the president of the Board of Trade, in an annual address, said power, gas, and water were the three major city problems. Of these power was the most important. He went on to say "let us conserve our credit in the direction of what is absolutely necessary for the health of our citizens." Manitoba Free Press, February 7, 1906.

campaign focussed on obtaining a permanent and visible water supply for the city.⁴¹

When he won the mayoralty contest in mid-December 1912,⁴² Deacon, along with other delegates from Winnipeg city council, met with the representatives of municipalities surrounding Winnipeg to discuss "the formation of a water district and make plans for a co-operative work."⁴³ At the first inter-municipal meeting in January 1913, R. A. C. Manning, the Reeve of Fort Garry, read a report which had been recommended by the Public Utilities Commissioner. The report favored the Shoal Lake source and suggested that water should be supplied to the whole of the Winnipeg area under the administration of an inter-municipal water district. Manning suggested that the meeting adopt the report and called for the formation of a water district.

Manning's proposals, which were adopted by the meeting, suggested an advisory committee or commission composed of the mayor and the board of control⁴⁴ of Winnipeg

⁴¹ Ibid., December 2-6, 1912.

⁴² Deacon polled 5,461 votes and his opponent Controller Harvey polled 4,398. Manitoba Free Press, December 16, 1912.

⁴³ Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1913.

⁴⁴ The board of control was an administrative organ of municipal government established by a 1906 amendment to the Winnipeg Charter. The amendment provided that "four controllers, to be elected annually from the city at large...

and the reeve of each municipality. The advisory committee would appoint one commissioner to administer the water district.⁴⁵ The cost of debentures to finance the water supply system was to be based on the "selling value of all land of the municipalities to be included in the district."⁴⁶ Deacon gave his general support to the idea of an inter-municipal water district and moved the appointment of a committee to draft legislation for the district.

At a second inter-municipal meeting at Winnipeg city hall, the Public Utilities Commissioner, submitted a draft bill which altered the Manning proposals. Instead of one commissioner there were to be three, a change suggested by Deacon, and the advisory board was to be composed of the Winnipeg mayor and the heads of the other municipalities instead of the heads of the councils and the Winnipeg board of control.⁴⁷ The draft was adopted by the whole inter-municipal committee on January 20, 1913 and at Deacon's suggestion submitted to each municipality

and the mayor" should constitute the Board; Statutes of Manitoba 1906, Chap. 95, Sec. 27. In 1918 provision was made for a referendum and the majority voted against continuation of the board which was abolished.

⁴⁵ Ibid., January 18, 1913.

⁴⁶ Loc. cit.

⁴⁷ Manitoba Free Press, January 23, 1913.

before it was sent to the legislature for approval.⁴⁸

Although representatives from the municipalities were involved in the discussions leading to the formation of the water district, it aroused political activity only amongst the residents of Winnipeg. The community leaders of this activity initially supported the idea of increasing the supply of water for Winnipeg not the surrounding urban areas. There was little support for embarking on a new form of inter-municipal administration. When the district scheme was proposed in January, it was condemned as a real estate deal under the maleficent direction of Manning and the real estate interests behind him.⁴⁹ As late as February 7, the Board of Trade representative at a Winnipeg council meeting was not fully behind an inter-municipal scheme. He offered the support of the Board but only for "co-operation with the municipalities."⁵⁰ Nor were all the elected representatives in favour of the district scheme. Alderman Davidson told a council meeting that Deacon's campaign for Winnipeg was not relevant to a water district scheme for

⁴⁸ Manitoba Free Press, January 31, 1913.

⁴⁹ Manitoba Free Press, February 7, 1913.

⁵⁰ Manitoba Free Press, February 7, 1913.

the whole area.⁵¹ He moved that the consideration of the water district scheme should be delayed for one year. Alderman W. R. Milton, supported this motion. Further opposition from Alderman Douglas led to the adoption of his proposal for a referendum on a water district before a vote on a money by-law.⁵² Other Winnipeg organizations supported co-operation of Winnipeg council with the municipalities and the representative of the Manufacturers' Association went as far as to suggest that "the city council should unite with the municipalities."⁵³

In Winnipeg, political support for the district scheme was widespread not only because it would solve the chronic shortage of water and thereby benefit both residents and businesses, but also because the whole urban area was considered to be one political unit. The Manitoba Free Press, which had suggested amalgamation before, suggested again in 1912 that "the suburbs that are part of commercial Winnipeg today, though in other municipalities, will tomorrow be part of municipal Winnipeg."⁵⁴ Alderman Fowler agreed with this viewpoint. In describing the water

⁵¹ Manitoba Free Press, February 7, 1913.

⁵² Loc. cit.

⁵³ Loc. cit.

⁵⁴ Manitoba Free Press, February 8, 1913.

district scheme to a public meeting, he said that the municipalities lying outside Winnipeg "might before long become a part of the city" and for this reason the water supply for the whole area had to be determined.⁵⁵

The Winnipeg organizations that had originally proposed an increased supply of water from a permanent and visible source were instrumental in initiating and carrying out the campaign for the referendum on the water district. At a joint meeting of fifty members of the Industrial Bureau and the Board of Trade, convened to discuss the scheme, W. J. Bulman, then a Winnipeg Alderman, and E. A. Mott, the president of the Board of Trade, were appointed to a committee which was to direct the campaign.⁵⁶ This committee organized a series of ten public meetings which were to be held at different points in Winnipeg.⁵⁷ At the first of these meetings Bulman presided, told the two hundred in attendance that the "organized business men...were a unit in favor of the scheme" and that "there might be individuals...that required persuasion."⁵⁸ Only one question was asked. At another meeting a clergyman, who

⁵⁵ Ibid., April 25, 1913.

⁵⁶ Others appointed to this committee were Mayor Deacon, Controllers Douglas and Midwinter and Alderman Fowler, Manitoba Free Press, April 19, 1913.

⁵⁷ Manitoba Free Press, April 21, 1913.

⁵⁸ Manitoba Free Press, April 25, 1913.

was protesting the way in which the smaller municipalities were being treated, was told by Mayor Deacon that he neither understood the scheme nor had made his protest in the right place.⁵⁹ The public leaders secured a vote overwhelmingly in favor of the scheme but representative of only 14% of the ratepayers.⁶⁰

Immediately after the referendum the Winnipeg councillors instructed the consulting engineers to report on the best means of supplying water from Shoal Lake. The decision of the councillors was to be communicated to the other municipal representatives at an inter-municipal meeting on May 21, 1913.⁶¹ Proclamation of the Act to Incorporate the Greater Winnipeg Water District followed the inter-municipal meeting. There were further endorsements of the scheme by Winnipeg organizations⁶² and the

⁵⁹ Manitoba Free Press, April 25, 1913.

⁶⁰ This percentage is based on the Manitoba Free Press report of the referendum on May 2, 1913, and the estimate of the possible number of voters made on October 2, 1913, when the money by-law was approved.

⁶¹ Manitoba Free Press, May 17, 1913.

⁶² A meeting of the Trades and Labour Council heard reports from President McGrath and J. W. Puttee which supported the scheme and recommended that labour men vote for it. Manitoba Free Press, September 19, 1913. The Builders Exchange passed a unanimous resolution supporting the formation of the district. Manitoba Free Press, September 25, 1913. The president of the Winnipeg Board of Trade wrote various members requesting them to "discuss the matter with...business associates." From a letter signed by John Stovel in the newspaper archives of the Free Press.

money by-law was approved on October 1, 1913 by virtually all those voting.⁶³

The low electoral interest in the referendum and money by-law vote, the overwhelmingly favourable vote, and the benefits Winnipeg derived from the scheme indicated that a referendum was unnecessary except as a procedure to legitimize the organization of a functionally integrating administration which had been initiated by dominant groups in the city. These groups considered that it was necessary to obtain a vote for a scheme that protected the autonomy of Winnipeg by giving its representatives control of the new administration but nonetheless removed some autonomy from the city council.

The benefits for Winnipeg were disproportionate compared to the benefits gained by St. Boniface. Finance for the scheme, while not unfair to the municipalities outside of Winnipeg, was particularly beneficial to Winnipeg. Even the cost of preliminary work done by the city of Winnipeg during 1912 or subsequently for the purpose "of securing permanent water supply" could be assumed and paid for by the water district.⁶⁴ By spreading the cost of the scheme amongst the municipalities and by setting up a

⁶³ Approximately 16% of the ratepayers voted and only 90 of these opposed the scheme. Manitoba Free Press, October 2, 1913.

⁶⁴ Statutes of Manitoba, 1913, Chap. 22, Sec. 29.

distinct corporate body, Winnipeg obtained a water supply, which was essential for its industrial growth, but avoided overburdening the credit resources of the city.⁶⁵ Mayor Deacon in countering opposition to the proposal to establish a corporate body to supply water instead of leaving jurisdiction to Winnipeg council said that the usual opposition was "that Winnipeg was using the outside municipalities to share the cost...for her benefit."⁶⁶ And Controller Douglas, who initially opposed the scheme, withdrew his opposition because the relative cost of the scheme to Winnipeg would decrease as Winnipeg land values rose less rapidly than the land values of the surrounding municipalities.⁶⁷ The land tax, as Alderman Fowler called the financial provisions of the Greater Winnipeg Water District, was an advantage the city would not easily obtain again from the legislature.⁶⁸ During the period that the Greater Winnipeg Water District was being approved by Winnipeg voters, the cost of water

⁶⁵ Mayor Deacon to a meeting in Fort Rouge. Manitoba Free Press, April 28, 1913. See also "The Greater Winnipeg Water District Scheme: A Prospectus giving a concise account of the objects and aims of the scheme and of provisions of the Water District Act." Free Press newspaper archives.

⁶⁶ Manitoba Free Press, September 26, 1913.

⁶⁷ Ibid., April 25, 1913.

⁶⁸ Ibid., April 28, 1913.

in Winnipeg was steadily rising without the supply becoming any more constant and the introduction of the scheme could be expected to reduce the future cost of water.⁶⁹

In political terms Winnipeg also benefited more than the surrounding municipalities. The original cost to Winnipeg was reduced "by at least 25 per cent" but Winnipeg had control over the district.⁷⁰ Each representative had one vote and "an additional vote for each ten million dollars of assessment of land over the first ten million."⁷¹ No by-law of the water district could become valid until approved by the ratepayers of Winnipeg. By retaining complete control of the district, Winnipeg lost no autonomy. In the opinion of the Manitoba Free Press Winnipeg even gained a degree of autonomy because the draft legislation for the district provided for a referendum. This meant that Winnipeg and not the provincial government

⁶⁹ On May 19, it was reported that Winnipeg council would order a 10% increase in all water rates because of increasing operating costs, and on May 31, the mayor asked residents to conserve water. Alderman Macdonald claimed that the city water department was not paying its way. It had accumulated a \$93,000 deficit in three years. Manitoba Free Press, June 3, 1913. On June 11, 1913, the Manitoba Free Press reported that a special meeting of Winnipeg council raised water rates by 15%.

⁷⁰ "The Greater Winnipeg Water District Scheme: A Prospectus"

⁷¹ Statutes of Manitoba, Chap. 22, Sec. 6 (4).

determined what would become law, and this was "the principle of home rule".⁷²

The French in St. Boniface were not aroused to political activity by the threats of amalgamation contained in many of the utterances of Winnipeg community leaders when they spoke of the need for a water district nor were the French concerned with the disproportionate financial and political advantages gained by Winnipeg as compared to St. Boniface. No organized political campaign developed in St. Boniface against the city council's participation in the inter-municipal scheme. Nor was there opposition to the voting arrangements for the district administrative board which enabled any Winnipeg representative to outvote all other municipal representatives. Whatever opposition there was to the district scheme was muted and unorganized. Mayor Thomas Berry of St. Boniface, reported to the second inter-municipal meeting in the Winnipeg Board of Control Room

...that in spite of rumours to be heard that St. Boniface was opposed to the action taken at the first organization meeting at the Industrial Bureau ...he could state that St. Boniface was fully in sympathy with the objects of the committee...which appealed to him as a good thing....⁷³

⁷² Manitoba Free Press, February 8, 1913.

⁷³ Ibid., January 23, 1913.

And Mayor Deacon was glad that the rumour of opposition that he had heard about was "without foundation."⁷⁴

The co-operation of St. Boniface in forming this integrative district was assured by Mayor Berry who was the first English speaking mayor elected in St. Boniface. After his first term as alderman during 1904, Berry had complained about the water works of the city and threatened to resign because he was dissatisfied with the way in which council business was managed.⁷⁵ By 1911 he was advocating that St. Boniface act in conjunction with Winnipeg to secure a visible supply of water. The meeting that heard this appeal was one of the Norwood Ratepayers Association, meeting in the Orange Hall.⁷⁶ In the municipal election following his announcement, he was elected mayor by the predominantly English wards. Between 1906 and 1911 the number of ratepayers in the original Ward 4, which was mostly English speaking, increased by 186% while the increase in Wards 2 and 3, in which the French were concentrated, the increase was only 56%. Berry was acting more for the English speaking wards which had elected him and

⁷⁴ Loc. cit.

⁷⁵ Manitoba Free Press, December 7, 1905.

⁷⁶ Ibid., November 8, 1911.

which required a more effective water supply system because of the rapid population growth, than for the French wards which were growing more slowly.

That substantial resistance to the water district scheme might have developed if St. Boniface had had more effective local leadership, can be surmised from the voting returns on a St. Boniface money by-law. In 1913 St. Boniface ratepayers voted on a \$50,000 by-law for the extension of the water system of St. Boniface. Some 9% of the St. Boniface ratepayers turned out to vote, but about 23% of those who voted rejected the by-law. Only .05% of Winnipeg ratepayers had voted against the water district.⁷⁷

If there had been resistance to the water district it was not expressed by organized French groups nor could it be expressed at the polls on a money by-law. The city charter of St. Boniface, which had required a vote on money by-laws, was amended in February 1913, just as the draft legislation for the water district had been completed, to provide that the city of St. Boniface could:

pass a by-law...for borrowing money and if necessary for issuing debentures and for levying rates for the payment of such debts on the rateable property in the city, without submitting a by-law or by-laws, to

⁷⁷ Calculated on the basis of returns in the Manitoba Free Press, November 7, 1913 and October 2, 1913.

the electors, in accordance with the provisions of section 529 of the...charter, to pay any sums of money by reason of any...order, judgment or decree made pursuant to any act of the Parliament of Canada or the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.⁷⁸

Regardless of the reasons for this amendment, it effectively removed from the St. Boniface ratepayers the privilege of voting on a money by-law for the district.

The organized activity of permanent groups in Winnipeg compared to the absence of such French groups in St. Boniface reflected the indifference of the French toward civic issues. Although the provision of one essential municipal service was to be taken over by the water district board controlled by the English, the French did not organize opposition to the scheme. There were no aggressive statements about the historical, cultural linguistic or religious distinctiveness of St. Boniface, or about the necessity of preserving this distinctiveness by maintaining the independence of the council of St. Boniface. The independence of the council was not related to the strongest feelings of ethnic identity.

⁷⁸ Statues of Manitoba, 1913, Chap. 72, Sec. 4.

CHAPTER IV

CIVIC ISSUES, ETHNICITY, PARTY, AND LOCAL AUTONOMY

In the previous chapter an examination of the formation of the Greater Winnipeg Water District illustrated some differences in the political activity of the French and English. This chapter indicates that the differences in political activity were not unique to the formation of the Greater Winnipeg Water District, but typical of different patterns of municipal political activity. To reveal these patterns, this chapter compares competition for civic offices and participation in municipal elections.

The main areas used for these comparisons are the municipal wards established when St. Boniface was incorporated as a town in 1883. Four wards were created then and the ward boundaries were continued unchanged when the town was incorporated as a city in 1908. Wards 1, 2 and 3 were the French wards. Wards 2 and 3 had the greatest concentration of French, and were separated from other parts of St. Boniface by the Seine River, railway tracks and main thoroughfares. Near the center of Ward 3 were the Roman Catholic Cathedral and the Palace of the Archbishop. The French wards, therefore, tended to be geographically isolated as well as culturally and religiously distinct.

In the early development of St. Boniface, Ward 4 came to be the English ward. The population of Ward 4 grew more rapidly than the population of any other ward and in 1909 it was divided into Wards 4 and 5, which were, respectively, the eastern and western halves of the original Ward 4. In the years after this ward division some minor changes were made in ward boundaries. The most significant of these changes was in 1913 when the northern boundaries of Ward 4 and 5 were moved further north so that some English settlement could be included in the English wards. The population growth of the city and the slight boundary changes of the wards did not alter the ethnic homogeneity of the wards during the years 1906 to 1917.

The differences in the ethnic composition of the wards was reflected in the competition for elective municipal offices. There was much less competition for these offices in the predominantly French wards as is shown by Table I, page 43. In the French wards acclamations for council and school board offices were more frequent than were acclamations in the English wards. These differences in competition for civic offices suggest that the French were less concerned about municipal affairs than were the English.

This indifference becomes more evident when French participation in municipal elections is compared with that of the English. Of the many factors that might have caused

TABLE I
 NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIVE OFFICES
 ACCLAIMED AS A PERCENTAGE OF OFFICES
 AVAILABLE FROM 1900 to 1917^a

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>School Trustee</u>
1	75.0	100.0
2	37.5	87.5
3	62.5	68.7
4	25.0	50.0
5 ^a	25.0	87.5

^a As Ward 5 was created in 1909, there were eight offices available for candidates from this ward but sixteen offices for candidates from each of the other wards.

differences in electoral participation, three are considered in this Chapter and factors with a more general influence on political activity and group organization are examined in Chapter V. The three factors considered in this Chapter are civic issues, ethnicity, and political parties.

From 1906 to 1916, a period for which some election returns are available and a formative period for the politics of St. Boniface, civic issues, which involved the quality of municipal administration, characterized the elections of 1907, 1909, 1910, 1911 and 1913. In 1907 a questionnaire addressed to municipal candidates was published in Le Nouvelliste, a St. Boniface newspaper. The candidates were asked if they favoured "a policy of actual waste" and expenditure on sumptuous furniture for St. Boniface city hall, if they approved of the "system of giving contracts" and if they desired to have the city accounts examined by certified auditors.⁷⁹ The insinuations of corruption in civic administration made during the 1907 campaign were denied by the incumbent mayor, Theo. Bertrand, although he was not running for re-election. During the 1909 campaign civic administration was again an issue when it was charged that the atmosphere in St. Boniface council chambers ^{was} ~~were~~ so corrupt it was "polluted".⁸⁰ In 1910 one mayoralty candidate

⁷⁹ Quoted in the Manitoba Free Press, December 5, 1907.

⁸⁰ Manitoba Free Press, November 19, 1909.

was "unsparing in his charges of crooked dealing" and claimed that a "clique" protected by Bleau, who had been mayor since 1908, ran the council.⁸¹ During the 1911 campaign civic administration became an issue when a group composed mostly of English residents petitioned St. Boniface council to protest the mismanagement of the construction of a bridge over the Seine River and the work of civic employees involved in other municipal services.⁸² During the election of 1913 an auditor, who had been brought in from Saskatoon, examined the accounts of the city. At a large meeting held before the election he reported that there were too many tax exemptions, which were causing high taxes, that a number of civic employees should not be re-assigned because they were incompetent, and that there were some indications of collusion between councillors and business firms dealing with the council.⁸³

The influence of the corruption issue on municipal elections is indicated by the comparison of voter turnouts⁸⁴

⁸¹ Manitoba Free Press, December 3, 1910.

⁸² Ibid., December 11, 1911.

⁸³ Ibid., December 10, 1913.

⁸⁴ Turnout was calculated by using the reports of the vote in the Manitoba Free Press. The base for calculating the percentage of voters casting ballots was "Liste des Voteurs de Saint Boniface". These lists were available for the years shown in Figure I, page 46. The absence of lists

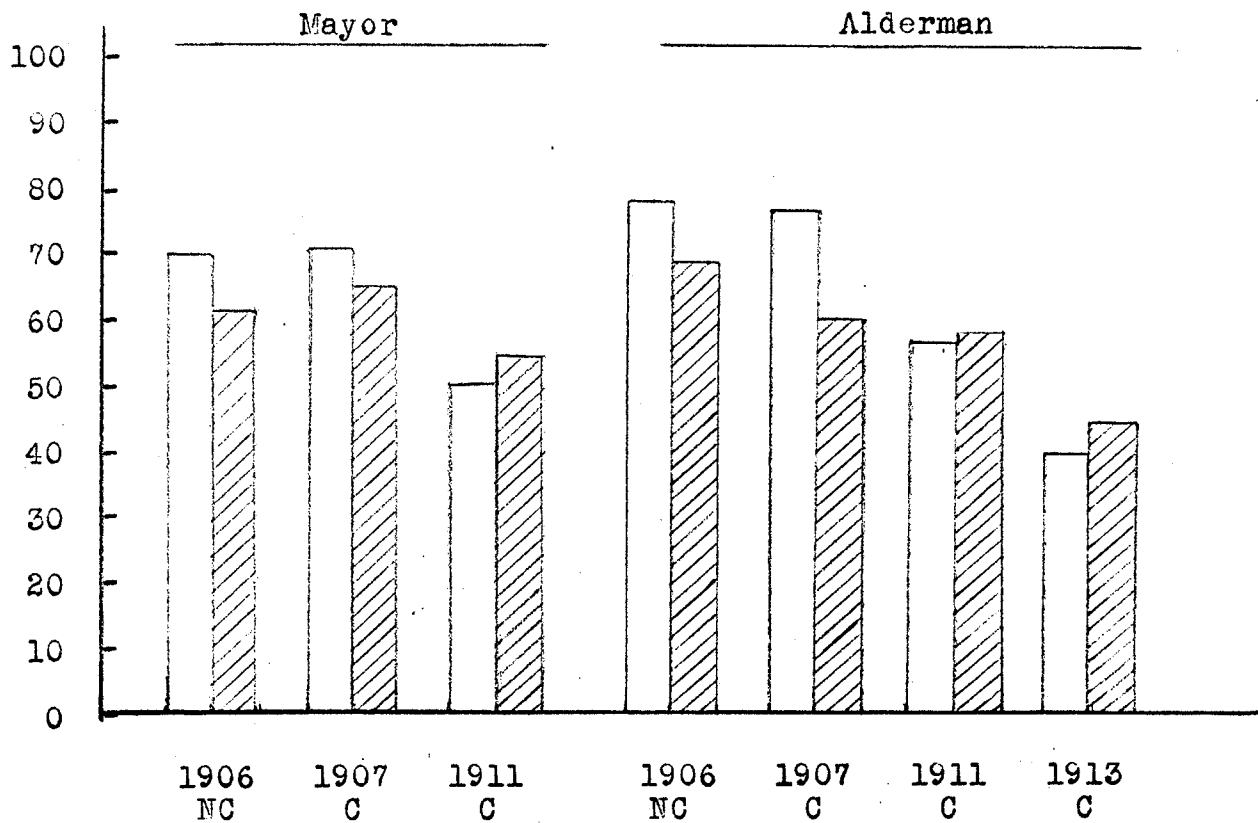


FIGURE I

VOTER TURNOUT FOR MAYOR AND ALDERMAN
IN WARDS 2 AND 4^a

NC - No civic issue

C - Civic issue

Ward 2

Ward 4



^aNo turnout could be calculated for the years 1908, 1909 and 1910 because there were no voters lists available for those years. In 1912 the mayoralty and the aldermanic elections in Ward 2 were won by acclamation and only a majority vote was reported for the aldermanic election in Ward 4.

presented in Figure I, page 46. This Figure compares voter turnouts for Ward 2, which was the most geographically isolated French Ward, and for Ward 4, which was predominantly English speaking. In 1907, the first year under review in which corruption was made an issue of a municipal election, the turnout for mayor and alderman in the French Ward was higher--for reasons that will be explained in a moment-- than it was in the English Ward. By 1911 the presence of this civic issue coincided with a larger turnout in the English than in the French Ward for both aldermanic and mayoralty elections. The high English and low French turnout was repeated in the aldermanic election of 1913, a year when civic administration was a prominent issue. From these comparisons it would seem that the presence of a civic issue tended to induce a larger vote amongst the English. If this turnout was related to voter identification with municipal institutions, then French identification with these institutions appeared to become weaker between 1907 and 1913. The incomplete election data, however, requires further examination of the elections to reveal more clearly that the French were not as closely identified with these institutions, at least in terms of voter turnout, as were the English.

for all years and the irregular manner in which the election results were reported--at times by stating only majorities obtained by a candidate--has meant that turnouts could not be calculated for all years.

The ethnic influence on municipal elections can be suggested by examining mayoralty and aldermanic election returns for Ward 2. Because the French were a concentrated and homogeneous group in Ward 2, ethnicity should have been a significant factor in municipal elections. There was some relationship between high turnout for the mayoralty contests of 1906 and 1907 and the presence in these elections of ethnic rivalry. In 1906, when a non-French candidate first ran for mayor, voter turnout in Ward 2 was 70%. This was much higher than had been normal in the Ward and higher than the 1906 mayoralty vote in the English Ward. The high turnout in the French Ward was attributed to ethnic feeling by the mayor elect who told his supporters, during his victory speech, that they had been true to the traditions of their race.⁸⁵ In 1907 ethnic rivalry for the mayoralty was again an issue and this partly explains the high 70% turnout in Ward 2. In the years following the first mayoralty contests between ethnic rivals, however, the ethnic issue declined in importance. In the election of 1908 the ethnic factor was the only issue but the total vote in Ward 2 declined.⁸⁶ By 1911 turnout in Ward 2 was down to 50% even though the ethnic factor was still present in the election campaigns for mayor.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Manitoba Free Press, December 19, 1906.

⁸⁶ See Figure II, page 49.

⁸⁷ See Figure I, page 46.

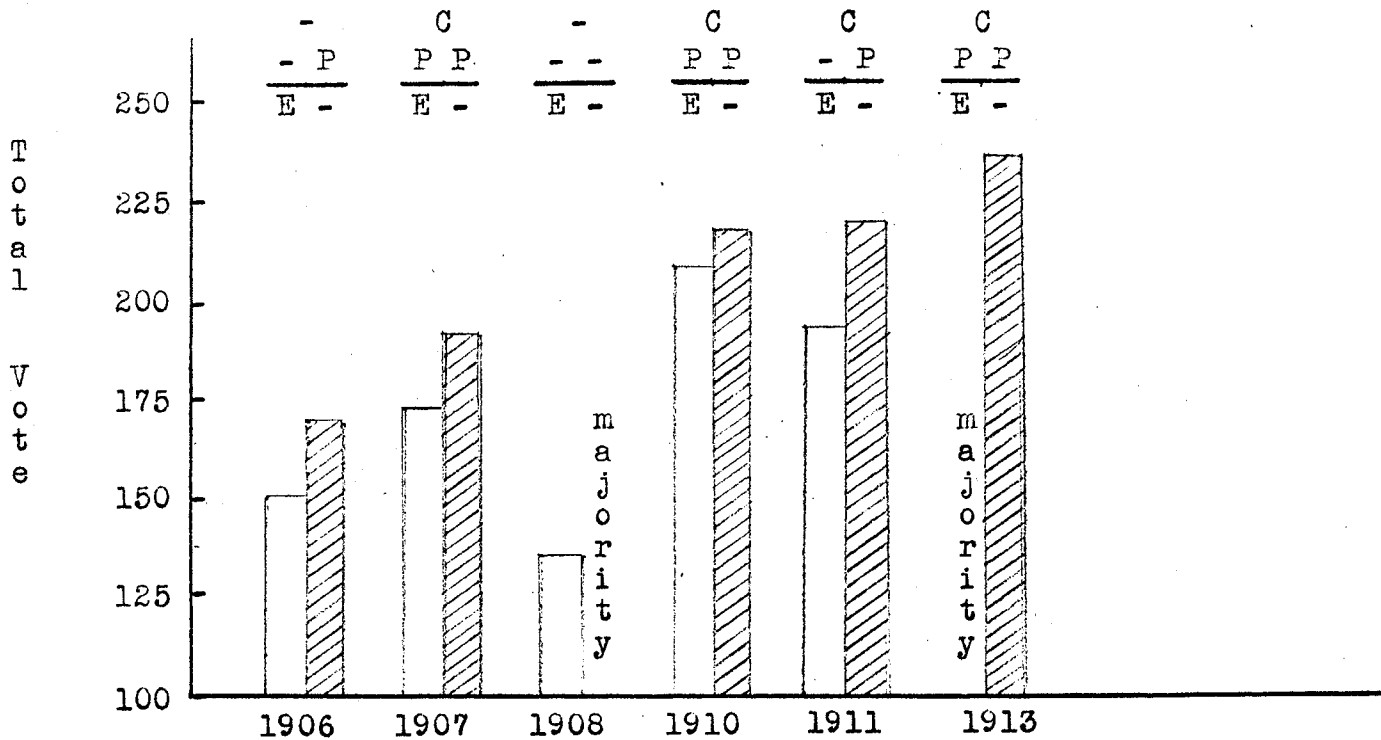


FIGURE II

COINCIDENCE OF TOTAL VOTE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WITH ETHNICITY, PARTY AND CIVIC ISSUES FOR WARD 2^a

- E - Ethnic contest
- P - Party alined candidates
- C - Civic issue
- Mayoralty
- Aldermanic

^aFor 1909 only majorities were reported for the aldermanic election in Ward 2 and the mayoralty was won by acclamation. In 1912 both aldermanic and mayoralty contests were won by acclamation.

The declining interest in the ethnic contests is also evident when the aldermanic returns are examined for the French Wards. In Wards 2 and 3, there was no ethnic rivalry because the candidates in these wards were always French. Yet the turnout for alderman was larger than that for mayor even though the latter contests involved the ethnic factor.

As ethnic rivalry seemed to have a declining influence on mayoralty elections in Ward 2 and was unrelated to turnout in aldermanic elections and as civic issues did not tend to result in higher turnouts in the French Ward 2 as compared to the English Ward 4, it remains to determine whether the party factor had more influence on elections than either civic issues or ethnicity. The influence of the party factor is examined by determining if mayoralty candidates and French aldermanic candidates were alined with a provincial party.⁸⁸

There was a coincidence, as is shown in Figure II, page 49 between the presence of a civic issue and contests of candidates alined with the two major parties. It would seem, therefore, that charges of corruption were related to

⁸⁸ Alinement was determined by examination of newspaper reports which identified some municipal candidates as Liberals or Conservatives when they were present at the functions of the provincial parties. An unalined candidate is thus one who was not reported as being present at a function of either party and was in no other way identified as a party man by the newspapers.

contests between such alined candidates and may well have been the direct result of party influence. The party influence, however, is more clearly revealed in those elections in which there was no contest between mayoralty candidates alined with a party. When the candidates for mayor were both alined with the Conservative party as in 1911 the French turnout dropped even though a civic issue was involved. Both Thomas Berry and J. A. F. Bleau, the mayoralty candidates of 1911, were alined with the Conservatives and the vote in the French Wards increased much less than the vote in the English Wards. But the presence of the civic issue in 1911 contributed to a higher turnout in the English Ward 4. The differences between French and English total vote for the 1911 election as compared to the 1910 election are shown in Table II.

TABLE II

TOTAL VOTE FOR MAYOR IN 1911 AS PERCENTAGE
CHANGE OVER TOTAL VOTE IN 1910

Ward 1	+ 13	Ward 4	+ 65
Ward 2	- 8	Ward 5	+ 26
Ward 3	+ 16		

Although the reports of the mayoralty returns for the 1913 election show only majorities, the returns for 1913 support the contention that party was more significant than civic issues for the French and civic issues more important for

the English. This is evident from the fact that the English voted for the candidate who had campaigned against the mismanagement of the city's affairs alleged by the external auditor even though this candidate was French. The French voters, however, disregarded the charges of mismanagement and voted for the incumbent mayor, J. A. F. Bleau who was aligned with the Conservative party.

The influence of party on the voting of the French can be clearly shown by comparing the elections of 1906 and 1908. In 1906 an unaligned⁸⁹ candidate, Theo. Bertrand, ran against Thomas Berry, who was aligned with the Conservative party. In this contest therefore, party was a factor in electoral choice. From Table III the results for 1906 show that there was no clear split along ethnic lines. The

TABLE III
ELECTION RESULTS FOR MAYOR IN 1906 and 1908^a
SHOWING ETHNIC SPLIT IN FRENCH WARDS
WHEN PARTY INFLUENCE WAS ABSENT

Ward	Theo. Bertrand	Thos. Berry		J.A.F. Bleau
	<u>1906</u>	<u>1906</u>	<u>1908</u>	<u>1908</u>
1	35	18	0	66
2	117	34	0	132
3	206	56	0	231
4	78	282	391	0

^a These returns were reported in both the Winnipeg Tribune and the Manitoba Free Press.

⁸⁹ See footnote 88 on page 50.

election results were quite different in 1908 when the influence of party was removed because both mayoralty candidates were aligned with the Conservative party. With the party factor removed, ethnicity became significant and split the vote according to ethnicity. All the French Wards voted for the French candidate and the English Ward voted for the English candidate. The presence of this cleavage in 1908 indicated that ethnicity only became a factor in municipal elections when party contests were absent.

The influence of party can be seen in the voting patterns presented in Figure II, page 49. In each of the aldermanic contests shown in Figure II a party contest was present and the vote increased along with the population. In the mayoralty elections, however, a party contest was not always present. When the party influence was absent the vote for mayor declined as in 1908 and 1911, despite the presence of the ethnic factor in both elections. Whenever there was a contest between candidates aligned with the Liberal and Conservative parties the total vote tended to be larger as in 1907 when the vote for mayor in all wards was 1,108 compared to 826 in 1906 and 850 in 1908.

The influence of the Conservative party in local politics in St. Boniface was attested to by the Manitoba Free Press. It accused "a Conservative ward heeler" of "ballot stuffing" and claimed that the evidence against him

had been removed from the council safe. There was considerable doubt, therefore, whether mayor Bleau had been elected. The Conservative mayor might not have received a majority of the votes lawfully cast in 1908.⁹⁰ But the mayor's position was secure as he was "persona ~~non~~ grata with the powers that be",⁹¹ whom the Free Press implied were either the Conservative government, the Roman Catholic hierarchy or both.

In the French Wards of St. Boniface ethnicity and civic issues were usually subordinated to party preferences. Civic issues were prominent only when there was a contest for mayor between candidates aligned with different parties, and the ethnic factor did not produce large votes unless party contests were absent. Ethnicity and civic issues were significant only when party differences did not influence voting decisions.

The influence of party, as is more fully described in the following Chapter, was detrimental to French local political activity. It seemed as if the concern of the French with the great provincial issue of education had absorbed all their political energies leaving nothing to stimulate the organization of groups concerned with local

⁹⁰ Manitoba Free Press, November 19, 1909.

⁹¹ Ibid., December 5, 1907.

affairs. The result is shown in Table IV. There was a continual decline in voter turnout for municipal elections, until the French voted much less in municipal elections than did the English.

TABLE IV
COMPARISON OF VOTER TURNOUT IN WARDS OF
GREATEST FRENCH AND ENGLISH CONCENTRATION

	French Ward 2		English Ward 4	
	<u>Mayor</u>	<u>Alderman</u>	<u>Mayor</u>	<u>Alderman</u>
1906	70.3	79.1	61.5	69.4
1907	70.7	78.0	66.0	61.9
1911	49.9	57.3	50.6 ^d	54.4 ^c
1913	a	40.7	a	48.2 ^e
1914	b	acclaimed	b	28.7

^a Only majorities reported for mayoralty elections.

^b Total vote for each candidate from all wards reported.

^c Average for Wards 4 and 5. Ward 4 turnout was 59.2% and Ward 5, 49.5%.

^d Average for Wards 4 and 5. Ward 4 turnout was 53.1% and Ward 5, 48.1%.

^e Average for Wards 4 and 5. Ward 4 turnout was 45.4% and Ward 5, 51.1%.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OVER EDUCATION ON FRENCH LOCAL AUTONOMY

Although comparisons of municipal political activity made in Chapter III and IV revealed that the French were relatively indifferent to civic issues and unorganized for action in municipal affairs, this did not mean that the French were politically apathetic. As this Chapter will show, the French were very active in religious politics, over the division of the diocese of St. Boniface and in secular politics over their rights in education. In both religious and secular politics the organizing zeal of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was evident.⁹² It was the leadership of the hierarchy that made education a critical issue in provincial politics.⁹³ This Chapter is concerned with the part played by the French hierarchy not only in making education a central issue but in making it a French cause and identifying this cause with the need to support the provincial Conservative party. Education and the leadership of the French hierarchy produced political groups which

⁹² George F. Stanley, "French and English in Western Canada", Canadian Dualism, Mason Wade, editor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 331.

⁹³ W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 241.

defined the autonomy of the French. These ethnic-religious political groups, focussed on a provincial issue, alined with a provincial party and organized on a regional basis, had a detrimental effect on the organization of local political groups. As a result local autonomy was subordinated to, rather than identified with, ethnic-religious autonomy.

In 1890, when the Manitoba School Act abolished denominational schools, there was little division amongst Roman Catholics about the detrimental effects of the Act or about the necessity for hierarchical leadership in opposing the right of the provincial legislature to pass the Act. Hierarchical leadership was asserted ten days after assent was given to the Manitoba School Act when "Archbishop Tache, on behalf of the Catholic section of the Board of Education, presented a memorial to the Dominion Government asking for disallowance of the act."⁹⁴ This memorial, the subsequent challenges to the legislation in the courts⁹⁵ and the petition before a committee of the cabinet in 1893 asking for remedial action was supported by Catholics regardless of their ethnic origin. The prominent position of the

⁹⁴ John W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1931), p. 63.

⁹⁵ City of Winnipeg v. Barrett, 1892 A.C., 445;
Brophy v. Attorney-General of Manitoba 1895 A.C., 221.

French hierarchy in Manitoba in leading the attack on the validity of the Act identified the French with the school question but political support for the hierarchy came from all segments of the Catholic community.

In 1897, however, the Laurier-Sifton Compromise laid the basis for the separation of French from other Roman Catholics over the issue of education. The Compromise allowed religious exercises in the schools if either a majority of the school board desired it or a certain number of parents petitioned for it. The school board, on petition by the parents requesting a Roman Catholic teacher, had to employ one if the average Roman Catholic pupil attendance was forty or more in urban areas or twenty-five or more in rural areas. The Compromise also provided for bi-lingual instruction, a provision which was intended "to preserve the right of the French to their own language in the schools in which they were a majority."⁹⁶ Although this Compromise was intended to satisfy the Roman Catholic minority, regardless of their ethnic origin, it clearly was most beneficial to those Roman Catholics who were settled in concentrated groups.

Where the Roman Catholic population was not sufficiently concentrated, Roman Catholics could not obtain

⁹⁶ John W. Dafoe, op. cit., p. 98.

religious instruction for their children in the public schools. In urban areas, where forty pupils were required in any school before religious instruction was allowed, there was discontent with the Act and with the Compromise of 1897. This discontent was reflected in the 1912 Coldwell amendments to the Public Schools Act. The intent of these amendments was never clear but it appeared that they would have reduced the pupil attendance requirement for religious instruction.⁹⁷ To obtain the enforcement of this legislation government officials met with the Winnipeg school board but the board refused to change the attendance requirements because the intent of the legislation was unclear. The legal effect of the amendments, therefore, was inconsequential. In retrospect the political effect of the amendments seemed inconclusive but in 1912 there was little doubt that the amendments were intended to secure the support of Roman Catholics in Winnipeg who were dissatisfied with the non-sectarian school system.⁹⁸

In St. Boniface, however, there was less reason for the French Catholics to be discontented with the school system. As the English Catholic weekly pointed out, the French "do not suffer from the Public Schools Act" as much

⁹⁷ Statutes of Manitoba, 1912, Chap. 65.

⁹⁸ Manitoba Free Press, April 15, 1913.

as "do those in centres of mixed population".⁹⁹ French predominance in certain areas of St. Boniface enabled them to obtain religious instruction for at least one-half hour per day as well as instruction in French. The basis of the Roman Catholics' division over the education issue, therefore, was that the French could accept the way in which the schools were to be administered under the Act and the Compromise whereas other Roman Catholics could not.

In the years after 1900 the French hierarchy continued to oppose the School Act but not the administration of the Act. Because the French hierarchy accepted the administration of the school system, they were also able to support the government responsible for the lenient administration of the Act. The enforcement of the school laws in 1914 was more liberal than enforcement had been in 1898.¹⁰⁰ The hierarchy, therefore, was willing to support the Conservative government even though it had made no legal concessions except the ineffectual Coldwell amendments.

As long as the educational policy of the Liberal party was diametrically opposed to what Roman Catholics wanted, and Conservative educational policy was at least

⁹⁹ The Northwest Review quoted in the Manitoba Free Press, April 28, 1913.

¹⁰⁰ La Liberte in the Manitoba Free Press, July 4, 1914.

ambiguous about religious instruction in the schools, the hierarchy found no difficulty in supporting the Conservative party. The elements of the Liberal education policy were a state university, neutral schools and compulsory education. This policy, said Archbishop Langevin, reflected "an attitude...opposed to Catholics."¹⁰¹ The Conservative party was the vehicle for the protection of Catholic rights in education and Archbishop Langevin tried to prevent opposition to it. In an episcopal charge, it was declared that he would not allow the Manitoba Federation of Catholic Laymen:

to become an engine of war against any political party whatsoever and still less against the party which has rendered so appreciable service in Manitoba.¹⁰²

The educational policy of the Conservative government and the support given to the Conservative party by the French hierarchy were partly responsible for the high vote for the Conservative candidate in St. Boniface. From 1903 to 1914, the number of votes cast for the Conservative candidate increased more rapidly than the vote for the Liberal candidate.¹⁰³ Even in the 1915 election, when the Conservative candidate was not the one who had been elected

¹⁰¹ Quoted in The Canadian Annual Review, 1914, p. 593.

¹⁰² Manitoba Free Press, May 9, 1913.

¹⁰³ See Figure II, page 62.

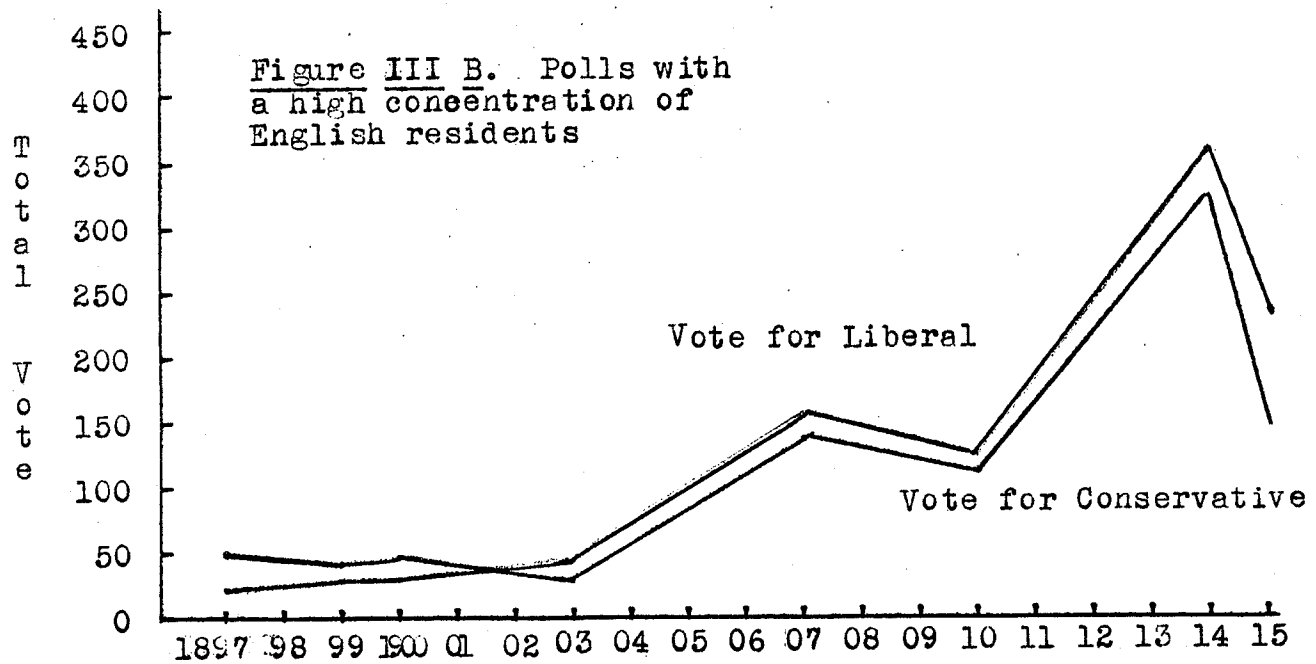
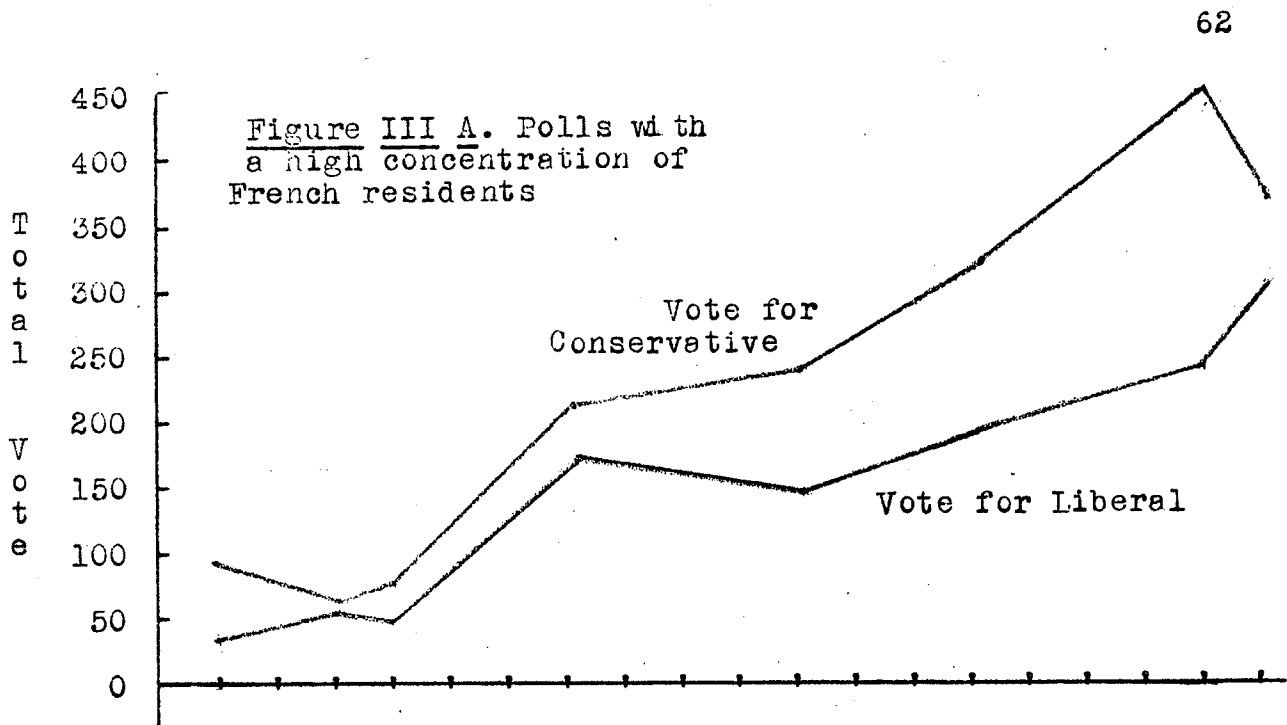


FIGURE III

COMPARISON OF TOTAL VOTE FOR CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PARTY CANDIDATES IN PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

in the previous five elections, the vote for the Conservative party remained much higher than the vote for the Liberal party. In all six of these elections it would seem that the French were voting for the party rather than the personality of the candidate. The preference for the Conservative party in the polls with a high concentration of French voters was much more pronounced than in the polls with a high concentration of English voters.¹⁰⁴ The French preference for the Conservatives was not the result of voter identity with a candidate of the same ethnic origin. From 1903 to 1915 both candidates in every provincial election were French a factor which tended to neutralize ethnic preference in voting. The difference between the French and English vote was the result of political organization supporting the Conservatives.

In the elections of 1900 through to 1914 the Conservative candidate in St. Boniface constituency was Joseph Bernier. In 1913 the provincial cabinet was expanded and Bernier was appointed Provincial Secretary. Most of the French in St. Boniface supported the appointment, even though it was tantamount to accepting the existing school legislation. Archbishop Langevin regarded the appointment as an "act of justice due to the Catholics of Manitoba".¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Figure III B compared to Figure III A, page 62.

¹⁰⁵ Manitoba Free Press, April 26, 1913.

The hierarchy in St. Boniface and many French Catholics urged all Roman Catholics to unite in the support of Bernier.¹⁰⁶ They were successful to the extent that Bernier, when he sought re-election after his appointment, was unopposed. But a French Roman Catholic in the cabinet had serious repercussions in the Catholic community in Manitoba.

The appointment of Bernier was the final step in identifying the religious and ethnic interests of the French with the Conservative party. Over the years, the leadership of the French hierarchy had focussed French political activity on education and on the need to support the Conservative party to protect French educational rights. When Bernier was appointed, the French indicated that ethnic considerations were more important than alignment with non-French Roman Catholics. Rather than maintain this alignment as the political base for defending their rights in education, the French preferred to rely on their influence with the Conservative party. The appointment of Bernier represented French Roman Catholic identity with the Conservative party and their isolation from the remainder of the

¹⁰⁶ A letter to the editor of the Manitoba Free Press signed by J. A. Lemieux claimed that the appointment of Bernier would give the Roman Catholics a new strength and prestige. The Protestants must enjoy the opposition of some Roman Catholics to the appointment and this, said the correspondent, "Would be a big joke if it were not a pity." April 23, 1913.

Roman Catholic community. By 1914 the identity of religious, ethnic and party interests was evident in such French language papers as La Liberte. In the election of 1914, La Liberte urged the French to vote in their "national and religious interests."¹⁰⁷

In the present fight this transcends all other considerations...when we drop our ballots into the ballot box let us have in view the cause of the Catholic French population of Manitoba.¹⁰⁸

The support given to the Conservatives by many French Roman Catholics was opposed by some French Liberals and many non-French Roman Catholics. For twenty-two years the Roman Catholics had struggled to re-establish the principle of separate schools. According to a resolution passed by the Manitoba Federation of Catholic Laymen, this had been the principle of Roman Catholics "irrespective of nationality".¹⁰⁹ The appointment of Bernier was not considered to be supported by Catholics representative of the religious minority.¹¹⁰ The appointment of Bernier revealed the ethnic split amongst Catholics. The French continued to support the Conservatives while many non-French Roman Catholics made their support

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Manitoba Free Press, July 9, 1914.

¹⁰⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁹ Manitoba Free Press, April 21, 1913.

¹¹⁰ Loc. cit.

conditional on a change in the school legislation and school administration of the government. By continuing to support the Conservatives regardless of the opinion of other Roman Catholics, the French isolated themselves as a religious and ethnic minority dependent on the Conservative party.

The separation of the French from the remainder of the Roman Catholic community was completed by the controversy culminating in 1916, over the erection of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. This diocese was to be created out of part of the diocese of St. Boniface, which, at one time, had included within its jurisdiction most of western Canada. The division of the St. Boniface diocese was accepted by the French laity and hierarchy as one of the changes resulting from the growth of the Roman Catholic population in western Canada. Geographically smaller dioceses were necessary for effective administration. But the French laity and hierarchy opposed a division of the St. Boniface diocese that would be detrimental to the French as an ethnic as well as a religious group. The regional division proposed by the Holy See would have placed some 20,000 French Roman Catholics under an English Archbishop. Such a "division" claimed Archbishop Béliveau, would place St. Boniface Diocese in an alarming and lamentable state."¹¹¹ It was based on "false information"

¹¹¹ Quoted in John Reid, "The Erection of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1961), p. 70.

provided to the Holy See by "the enemies of St. Boniface."¹¹²

Although the French considered opposition to the division to be futile, they did organize opposition to the proposed boundaries of the new diocese. A petition circulated amongst French Roman Catholics was signed by 32,000 of them, nearly the whole French Roman Catholic population. Armed with this petition protesting the proposed boundaries, a delegation went to Rome. This political activity was, in part, responsible for the subsequent alteration in the boundaries. The altered boundaries created not only the Archdiocese of Winnipeg but a "national" or ethnic diocese of St. Boniface. This diocese was defined by the ethnic settlement in south-eastern Manitoba and included most of the French Roman Catholics. In secular politics this national diocese was significant for it provided the base from which the French could carry on the political struggle for their language, culture and schools.¹¹³

The political organization over this religious issue revealed more clearly than the political organization over secular issues both the political activity of the French and the geographic base for this activity. The ethnic diocese was the source of the strength of the political

¹¹² Loc. cit.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 83.

activity of the French. By organizing the French Roman Catholics on a regional basis within the boundaries of the diocese the French hierarchy could exert significant pressure on the Conservative government. This organization had to include the majority of French Roman Catholics because non-French Catholics were unwilling to unite with the French for the cause of religious education in the schools after the French had shown greater concern for their own ethnic interests than for the interests of the Roman Catholic population as a whole. The effective organization of French Catholics helped prevent legislation that would be detrimental to French religious and educational interests, but only as long as the Conservatives remained in power.

The effectiveness of French political organization was transitory, as it depended on political influence with the Conservative government. This influence was evident in the lenient administration of the schools act which allowed instruction in many languages. Teachers using these languages were often Roman Catholics. By 1914, however, the Conservative party machine was entangled in the scandal over the construction of the Manitoba Legislative Building. In the same year the Conservative cabinet, whose members were implicated in the scandals, resigned. The end of a Conservative government left the French in a vulnerable political position. The French could not expect the Liberal

party elected in 1915 to favor French Roman Catholic interests. Opposition to the Liberals had continued for too long and had been too blatant. Nor could the French Roman Catholics expect to find political allies in other Roman Catholics for the French had sacrificed such an alliance to their own ethnic interests.

The isolation and consequent political vulnerability of the French was revealed in 1916. The Liberal Minister of Education introduced a bill to repeal Section 258 of the Public School Act, which had originated with the bi-lingual provision in the compromise.¹¹⁴ For the French the removal of the bi-lingual provision was not merely an attack on their language but an attack on their religion and consequently on their ethnic autonomy.¹¹⁵ Reaction to this legislation came mostly from the French. At a meeting of some 1,200 citizens, which met to protest the repeal of the bi-lingual provision, the main speakers were French delegates.¹¹⁶ A French paper, La Libre Parole was issued for the first time in Winnipeg and expressed "strong views

¹¹⁴ Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 673.

¹¹⁵ In the debate on the bill "Mr. Prefontaine contended that this action involved the re-opening of the school and religious issue and the creation of dissension in the midst of war." Loc. cit. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁶ These speakers were Hon. J. E. Bernier and Judge Prendergast. Ibid., p. 674.

as to the need and the right of a dual language and Catholic schools."¹¹⁷ The French organized opposition to the repeal of the bi-lingual provision but their efforts were unavailing. The political activity opposing the repeal dissolved the party lines dividing the French Catholics¹¹⁸ but the mobilization of the majority of the French could not prevent the repeal which became effective on August 21, 1916. Ethnic-religious groups organized on a regional basis were ineffective without the political support of non-French Roman Catholics and the party in power.

The failure of the French to retain the bi-lingual provision indicated that partisan involvement in provincial politics and strong support of a provincial party offered no greater protection of French rights in education than had constitutional "guarantees" embodied in the British North America Act and the Manitoba Act. After the partisan method of defending the vestiges of their rights had become as ineffective as the constitutional "guarantees", the French had two options for the defense of their rights. The first

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 675.

¹¹⁸ In the Legislature T. D. Ferely, a Liberal, urged the Liberal "Government to maintain the right of instruction in dual languages." And it was the Liberal P. A. Talbot who described his party's repealing legislation as "criminal treatment of a minority" which would "not be assimilated". Ibid., pp. 671 and 673.

was to continue political activity organized on a regional basis and directed at the provincial government but unaligned with any party. This was the course followed by the French with the consequences for local autonomy described in Chapter VI. The second option was to develop political organizations composed of the French within St. Boniface which would be oriented to civic issues. This course, which would have led to the development of local autonomy, was not followed because of the consequences of hierarchical leadership. The involvement of church leadership and religion with the educational issue had focussed French political activity on provincial affairs and made civic issues virtually irrelevant.

Comparisons of voter turnout in municipal and provincial elections made in Table V, page 72, indicates that local affairs were much less important than provincial politics. French turnout for provincial elections was usually higher than it was for civic elections. In the provincial election of 1914, when the appointment of Bernier represented the identity of ethnic interests with the Conservative party, the turnout in the French polls in Ward 2 was 93.5%. Some 65% of the French who voted in 1914 voted for the Conservative party. The high turnout for provincial elections revealed a greater involvement in provincial political issues than in municipal affairs and a

TABLE V
 COMPARISON OF VOTER TURNOUT IN AREAS OF
 GREATEST FRENCH CONCENTRATION: WARD 2
 TURNOUT IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS COMPARED
 TO TURNOUT IN POLLS LOCATED WITHIN WARD 2

	Municipal Elections Ward 2		Provincial Elections Polls Within Ward 2
	Mayoralty	Aldermanic	
1906	70.3	79.1	a
1907	70.7	78.0	80.8
1910	b	b	68.5
1911	49.9	57.3	a
1913	c	40.7	a
1914	c	acclaimed	93.5
1915	acclaimed	acclaimed	87.8
1920	d	d	78.6

a No provincial elections

b No lists available

c Majorities only

d Not examined

close alinement with the Conservatives. The support of the Conservatives was intended to result in some protection for French rights in education. But the party connection, as was pointed out in Chapter IV, was a significant factor in municipal elections. Without the party influence in local politics, French turnout in civic elections would have been much lower than it was. Party was significant for the French in local as in provincial politics.

The consequence of the organizing zeal of the French hierarchy was to relate the strongest feelings of French identity--language, religion, ethnicity and culture--to provincial politics. As educational policy was formed by the provincial government, ethnic groups were organized to influence the provincial government. The hierarchy may have had to organize the French on a regional basis but this form of organization ignored the significance of civic and urban institutions in maintaining the values of an ethnic group. The ethnic organization of the French could be aroused only over education and was unresponsive to wholly urban issues. The regional base of ethnic political organization was predominantly rural and unconcerned with the problems of urbanization. Within the ethnic group, therefore, there was an incipient rural-urban split over non-educational issues.

Hierarchical involvement in secular politics, the

emphasis on the educational issue and the connection with a provincial party resulted in French autonomy being defined by ethnic-religious groups organized regionally. In effect, there were no local political groups organized for action in civic affairs. The autonomy of the French in St. Boniface came to be represented by education rather than by the territorial areas of the city and its council.

CHAPTER VI

THE INFLUENCE OF NON-PARTY POLITICS ON ETHNIC AND LOCAL AUTONOMY

After the First World War, the decline of partisanship and the development of coalition governments in Manitoba created a political milieu in which French ethnic autonomy could be preserved because it was not attacked. A non-party system enabled the French minority to survive. This survival made ethnic organizations seem stronger politically than they actually were and made political organizations for the protection of local autonomy seem unnecessary. In the long run, the non-party system had a debilitating effect on the political organization of the French but it was a differential effect, weakening local autonomy more than ethnic autonomy. The effect of non-party politics on ethnic autonomy can be seen by examining group activity related to education and the effect on local autonomy can be indicated by examining political activity related to the formation of metropolitan government.

After 1916 it was evident that the French could not alter the educational system to their advantage but only defend the vestiges of their educational rights. The exigencies of a minority position made increasingly precarious by a growing non-French population in Manitoba compelled

the French to accept the existing situation in education. The status quo in education might have turned the French toward political objectives other than the defense of their rights in education and to other forms of political organization than regionally based ethnic groups. But education had become an idée fixe. Because of the obsession with the defense of education French political groups remained oriented to this provincial issue and consequently to provincial politics. The pattern of French political activity in Manitoba prevented the development of political groups with the objective of maintaining the autonomy of St. Boniface. French political organization changed only to become non-partisan and this helped perpetuate the pattern of political activity existing in 1916 rather than encourage further changes, because it conformed with a swing from party to non-party politics in Manitoba.

Non-party politics developed in the province partly because the excesses of partisanship had discredited the party system. The charges and counter-charges of corruption that had characterized provincial politics during the Premiership of Rodmund Roblin and the exposure of the financial scandals over the construction of the Legislative Building, convinced many voters that less partisan politics would reduce the causes of political corruption. The move toward non-party politics was reinforced by political

movements which were discontented with the policies of the old parties. The farmers, long dissatisfied with the policies of the federal government and federally based parties, began to form farmers movements. The Non-partisan League expanded from the United States into Western Canada, and farmers created their own indigenous political organizations. These organizations expressed both a regional and economic discontent with federally based political parties. The farmers' movement took various organized forms but usually opposed traditional party organization and cabinet government. Farm and urban discontent with the established party system was implicit in the demand for proportional representation beginning about 1916 and resulting in the proportional system in Winnipeg in 1924.

The election of the farmer Progressives in the 1922 Manitoba election, after a campaign unsullied on their part by the usual party organization and leadership, might be taken as the beginning of the non-party system. The anti-party feeling that contributed to the election of the Progressives "led to a fondness for coalition and eventually culminated in a non-partisan administration."¹¹⁹ As many of the ministers in the coalition cabinets of the Manitoba governments had gained their political experience in municipal

¹¹⁹ M. S. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 63.

politics, they tended to consider cabinet functions as being similar to the functions of a municipal council. The absence of strong party organizations and majorities encouraged this confusion over the role of cabinet government. As a result, cabinet government became little more than municipal administration.¹²⁰ Every new governmental policy was expected to be ratified by the electorate much as a municipal money by-law was approved by the ratepayers.

A provincial government that avoided introducing policy changes, that reduced cabinet government to the level of municipal administration and that sought the approval of the electors for policies it could not avoid introducing, favored the minority position of the French. Without strong majority party support no government could introduce and carry legislation as detrimental to the French interests as were the Acts passed in 1890 and 1916. There was almost a political vacuum at the center of provincial politics in which the French could be active without meeting much resistance. Even though the provincial political system had abolished most of the rights of the French as well as the safeguards to those rights, the French were able to participate in this system because it had become a non-party system. The farmers' government first made possible French

¹²⁰ W. L. Morton, op. cit., p. 464.

participation in provincial politics "without loss of identity."¹²¹ The continuance of non-party politics and the evolution of coalition cabinets created a political milieu in which non-partisan ethnic groups appeared successful and local groups to preserve the autonomy of the city appeared unnecessary.

The major French group, organized in 1916, was l'Association d'Education. It was the vital organization necessary for the preservation of "faith and language...the essentials of survival."¹²² L'Association enabled laymen as well as the hierarchy to play a major part in the fight for survival. The membership of l'Association was drawn primarily from the region south and east of St. Boniface. It was mostly a rural membership with the French from St. Boniface in a minority within the organization. The main objective of the organization was to ensure the survival of the French as an ethnic minority through the use of the educational system, particularly primary schools. Archbishop Béliveau set out the basis of the organization in 1916.

Il nous faut cette union pour vivre et faire notre quote-part pour la cause du droit et de la justice

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 384.

¹²² George F. Stanley, "French and English in Western Canada," in Canadian Dualism, Mason Wade, editor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 332.

en notre pays....Les nôtres seront fiers et forts quand en face des lois scolaires injustes; ils sauront individuellement prendre rang parmi les défenseurs du droit et collectivement s'entendre pour garder à Dieu et à l'Eglise l'âme de leurs enfants, et transmettre à leurs descendants le parler de leurs aïeux.¹²³

The culture and language of the ethnic minority were to be preserved through political activity over the educational policies of the provincial government. This activity was to be not only defensive, to protect rather than expand French rights in education, but non-partisan. The early membership of l'Association reflected its avowed non-partisan nature. At the 1920 annual meeting of l'Association, Noel Bernier, the son of Joseph Bernier, was elected president, and Horace Chevrier, the Liberal candidate in St. Boniface constituency in the 1907 election, was among the delegates.¹²⁴

The defensive nature of l'Association was evident from its inactivity except when a change in provincial educational policy was proposed. Such a change was introduced by the provincial government in April 1945. The legislation would have reduced the number of school districts from 1,800 to 34.¹²⁵ The efforts of l'Association, with the help of Edmund Prefontaine and his colleagues from rural consti-

¹²³ Quoted in George F. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

¹²⁴ Manitoba Free Press, June 23, 1920.

¹²⁵ George F. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

tuencies in the legislature, were partly responsible for the amendments to the bill which prevented the consolidation of school districts. The amendments provided for an experiment which would consolidate two school districts. The proposed powers of the government to appoint members to the school boards of consolidated districts and to abolish small school boards by regulation were withdrawn. Appointment to consolidated school district boards was to be by election and consolidation was to be introduced by local initiative.¹²⁶

The manner in which the bill to consolidate school districts was altered indicated how the political effectiveness of l'Association depended on rural support, both from French and non-French people, and on non-partisan provincial politics. French group activity was not the main factor in forcing the changes in the bill. French interests in this measure coincided with the interests of most of the rural areas which wanted to retain local control over education. But even this combined French and non-French rural opposition to the bill did not compel the government to withdraw the legislation. The political success of the French, therefore was limited and depended on the continued existence of a non-party coalition type government. This type of government was continued after the Liberal-Progressives formed the

¹²⁶ Loc. cit.

government in 1950, and the position of the cabinet on school district consolidation was clear:

if a community or district gave a clear indication that it wanted a referendum on the larger unit, the government would make arrangements to hold one. The demand must come from the grass roots--this was "democracy." The cabinet offered no leadership and took no positive stand for or against....¹²⁷

Non-party politics preserved ethnic autonomy by allowing the French to participate in the politics of the province without depriving them of their identity. This autonomy was defined by groups whose raison d'être was provincial educational policy. The effect of hierarchical leadership and a religious and ethnic minority position, had been to make education the emotional basis for ethnic autonomy and the motivation for political activity. This political activity had been aggressive, based on co-religious support and then on close alinement with the party in power. The impossibility of re-establishing separate schools and the bi-lingual provision in the School Act, had led to defensive group activity relying not on co-religious or party support but on rural support that was often non-Catholic and anti-party. Unlike the other Winnipeg urban populations, which developed some antipathy to the farmers' government, the French political groups became more closely alined with

¹²⁷ M. S. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 107.

the farmers' government and its rural support. The large rural membership in French ethnic groups and the necessity of alinement with rural elements to preserve the existing situation in education tended to prevent the French in St. Boniface from considering the problems of urbanization. French political activity could not be easily re-directed from concern with education to a concern for urban problems.

In St. Boniface the active political groups did not focus on the city council, which neither set educational policy nor controlled expenditure on education, but on the educational policy of the provincial government. The focus on education made the battles of the 1890's and that of 1916, and the defunct threats of the Orange Order, seem more important than traffic control, urban renewal, zoning, local finance, and other problems of urbanization developing in the 1950's. These political groups were oriented not to urban problems or to social change but to the defense of the status quo in education and the preservation of the past.

As a result of the concern with the great ethnic-religious issues of the past and with education, which was only one area of governmental policy, the French were unprepared to cope with the movement for metropolitan government. The French had few representatives and no groups

128 M. S. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 105.

directly concerned with urban affairs and with the protection of French control over those affairs. This proved to be detrimental to the municipal autonomy of St. Boniface, because the government leaders tended to formulate policy after various organizations and pressure groups had discussed alternate policies. This group process was to "result in the formation of a real grass roots opinion"¹²⁸ upon which the government could base its policies. This group process did involve the government in an investigation of its relations with the municipalities and eventually to an investigation of urban government within the Greater Winnipeg area. In these developments the French in St. Boniface played a small part until the rejuvenation of provincial parties led to the possibility of a provincial government that would legislate without resorting to the grass roots.

The initiative for the investigation of the relations between the province and the municipalities came from two "grass roots" organizations; The Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Urban Association.¹²⁹ The provincial government, in response to the requests of these and other organizations and individuals, established the Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee in 1951 to "study financial and administrative relations between the municipalities and

¹²⁹ Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, Report, 1953, p. 9.

other public bodies of the province and the Provincial Government."¹³⁰

The French in St. Boniface had no reason to believe that the investigations of this committee would interfere with either ethnic autonomy or the autonomy of St. Boniface. The Committee was not instructed to investigate the municipal government structure of St. Boniface or the administration of education. It was given "no detailed instructions or terms of reference."¹³¹ The problems of provincial-municipal relations would likely involve the Committee in investigations of education and the administration of St. Boniface, but even if it did make recommendations on these subjects, the implementation of such recommendations was improbable. On receiving the recommendations the government would, as it usually did, seek the approval of the municipalities--of the grass roots--before attempting to implement any major reorganization. As the government would likely seek unanimous approval, the French had no need to be concerned about ethnic or local autonomy as they would have a veto.

As the Committee was given "the widest possible

¹³⁰ From the letter signed by Premier D. L. Campbell dated May 8, 1951, inaugurating the Committee. Quoted in Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, Report, 1953, p. 9.

¹³¹ Loc. cit.

latitude as to procedure",¹³² it established several sub-committees.¹³³ The Metropolitan Sub-committee examined the administrative structure of the municipalities in the Winnipeg urban area. This Sub-committee was directly concerned with the autonomous nature of the municipalities as one source of the problems of urbanization. The Report of the Sub-committee described the Winnipeg urban area as "one integrated and interdependent unity, based primarily upon... commercial, industrial, financial and transportation facilities."¹³⁴ Within this economically integrated area "each municipality constitute[d] a separate jurisdiction" and consequently there was "no corresponding political integration."¹³⁵ If the costs of developing the whole urban area were to be shared equitably by the municipalities "ways and means" had to be considered "whereby more effective co-ordination of effort and more equitable financial arrangements might be achieved in those matters...of common concern

¹³² Loc. cit.

¹³³ Three sub-committees were established: a Technical Research Committee, a committee to examine the organization of local government services outside the Greater Winnipeg area, and a committee to examine organization and local government services in the Greater Winnipeg area. Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, Report, 1953, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁴ "Report of the Exploratory Sub-committee on the Organization of Local Government Services in the Greater Winnipeg Area", Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, Report, p. 83.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 84.

throughout the metropolitan area."¹³⁶

Greater co-ordination of public services could be achieved by total amalgamation, continuation and creation of special districts with a Town Planning and Zoning Board or by "a single Metropolitan Board which would supersede all existing metropolitan Boards or Commissions."¹³⁷ The Committee discarded the first two methods and recommended that a Metropolitan Board assume responsibility "for all services...being administered by these" Boards and Commissions"together with any other services which might in future be organized on a metropolitan basis.¹³⁸ Although the Metropolitan Board was not to assume control over education in the urban area, the Sub-committee recommended that two school districts existing in any one municipality should be amalgamated.¹³⁹

Although the concept of economic interdependence underlying the recommendations of the Report was an indication of the basic reason for municipal reorganization, the French neither opposed this concept nor the recommendation for a Metropolitan Board. The creation of such a board would have reduced the control that the council of

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 93.

¹³⁸ Loc. cit.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 92.

St. Boniface had over some municipal services but this did not concern the French. They were more opposed to the recommendation for the amalgamation of school districts within any municipality as this would have reduced French control over school administration in St. Boniface. But opposition to this recommendation was deterred by the government's adoption of "the most desirable manner...to...assist school districts"¹⁴⁰ recommended by the Committee. This recommendation was "an expansion and adjustment of the present existing grant policy,"¹⁴¹ The government, therefore avoided the problem of the reorganization of school administration and school districts as well as the opposition of French groups who were most concerned to retain control over education by maintaining the existing school system. The French, therefore, remained as indifferent to the recommendations of the Committee as they had been to its creation. Their indifference was reflected in the absence of briefs from French groups,¹⁴² and of French citizen representation

¹⁴⁰ "Statement of Government Policy with respect to Provincial-Municipal Relations delivered by Hon. Douglas Campbell to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, February 25, 1953," Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, Report, p. 182.

¹⁴¹ Loc. cit.

¹⁴² Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, Report, p. 15.

on the Main Committee¹⁴³ and the Metropolitan Sub-committee, and it was justified by the manner in which the government handled the recommendations of the Committee.

As the government accepted the Committee's recommendation to increase school grants and proposed no reorganization of school administration detrimental to French interests, the remaining important recommendation affecting St. Boniface was for the Metropolitan Board. In the Statement of Government Policy printed with the Committee's Report, the government refused to initiate this recommendation.¹⁴⁴ The government agreed with the recommendation for a Metropolitan Board and intended to bring it to the attention of the metropolitan councils,:

with the suggestion that if it commends itself to them, they take joint action regarding it. The government was prepared, if the Councils of the City of Winnipeg and adjoining municipalities so advised to bring in legislation for that purpose at the present session.¹⁴⁵

After declining to act on the recommendation for a Metropolitan Board, Premier Campbell passed the initiative for municipal reorganization to Winnipeg. He asked the mayor of

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 10-12. There was one government representative on the Main Committee who was of French origin. The first such representative was Sauveur Marcoux and then Edmund Prefontaine.

¹⁴⁴ Op. cit., p. 173.

¹⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

that city, G. A. Coulter, to discuss the recommendations of the Committee.¹⁴⁶ When the committee named by Mayor Coulter met with representatives of other municipalities and formed the Metropolitan Exploratory Committee,¹⁴⁷ and it subsequently needed financial assistance to carry on, the provincial government refused to provide the money. According to a government spokesman, financial assistance provided by the government might be "construed as interference."¹⁴⁸ Nothing would be done by the government about municipal reorganization until the municipalities agreed on a plan but no financial aid would be forthcoming to help reach agreement.

The government was reluctant to introduce any scheme for municipal reorganization without the prior agreement of all the municipalities involved and would probably have required a referendum on any scheme before it became operative.¹⁴⁹ But some municipal representatives, although unable

¹⁴⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, March 6, 1953.

¹⁴⁷ Winnipeg Tribune, September 16, 1953.

¹⁴⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, October 26, 1953.

¹⁴⁹ The attitude of this government toward a referendum before the introduction of a metro scheme was stated by an ex-minister during the debate on Bill 62 establishing the Metropolitan Corporation. "This method of a referendum in determining political questions of such magnitude is a common practice and is well known in Canada, and particularly in this province. It is by way of referendum that the people who have a stake in a particular question are informed and it is in this way that elected officials who proposed the referendum

to agree on a scheme for reorganization, continued to pressure the government for financial assistance. By February 1954, a year after the Committee Report had been received by the government, the cabinet had become willing to offer financial assistance for further investigations of the urban problem and possible solutions. At a meeting with the Manitoba Exploratory Committee, a government representative announced that the scheme could not flounder "for the sake of a few dollars."¹⁵⁰ The chairman of the Exploratory Committee considered that this indefinite promise of financial assistance "left the door wide open to aid the plan later on."¹⁵¹ By November 8, 1954, a sub-committee of the Exploratory Committee had met with government representatives and reached an agreement.¹⁵² After this meeting Premier Campbell announced that the government would finance a study of reorganization of municipal government in the Winnipeg

are required to provide the information to the electorate in order that an informed vote can be made." Edmond Prefontaine, Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, Debates and Proceedings, February 29, 1960, pp. 1033-1034.

¹⁵⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, February 9, 1954.

¹⁵¹ This statement was attributed to C. E. Simonite, who had been Chairman of the Metropolitan Sub-committee and was, at this time, Chairman of the Exploratory Committee. Loc. cit.

¹⁵² This sub-committee was composed of C. E. Simonite, Mayor Leslie Bodie of East Kildonan and Reeve J. H. Sansome of Assiniboia. Winnipeg Tribune, December 8, 1954.

area.¹⁵³ By July 7, 1955, the government had agreed to pay the full cost of the study,¹⁵⁴ which became the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission. The Commission was appointed by order-in-council, as was suggested by the Metropolitan Exploratory Committee,¹⁵⁵ and the government selected the commissioners from lists submitted by the municipalities, a process which assured that St. Boniface would have a representative but not necessarily a French representative.

The French were politically inactive during these negotiations which eventually led to a metropolitan form of government. The St. Boniface councillor on the Metropolitan Exploratory Committee seemed unconcerned about St. Boniface council losing any autonomy or control over municipal services. The French made no representations to St. Boniface council protesting the participation of St. Boniface councillors in the work of the Exploratory Committee or opposing municipal reorganization. The main concern of the St. Boniface council was that no allowance had been made in the city's budget for the costs of the Metropolitan Exploratory Committee.¹⁵⁶ In the early 1950's the arguments from

¹⁵³ Winnipeg Free Press, December 8, 1954.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., July 7, 1955.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., August 17, 1955.

¹⁵⁶ Mayor E. A. Hansford reporting to council on the work of the Exploratory Committee. Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1953.

St. Boniface opposing the metropolitan solution to urban problems were not founded on the need to preserve the cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic autonomy of the city or even the autonomy of the council to manage its own affairs. Municipal reorganization, if it did not interfere with education, was not perceived as a threat to ethnic autonomy and the removal of autonomy from the city council was not regarded as a loss by the French because their autonomy was ethnic not local.

Ethnic autonomy was not a basis for opposing the metropolitan solution to urban problems. The negotiations leading to the formation of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, its investigations and recommendations were primarily concerned with the reorganization of urban government and the means of providing urban services more efficiently.¹⁵⁷ The provision of these services concerned the urban French in St. Boniface but not the rural French in Manitoba. There was no community of interest between rural and urban French on the solution of urban problems. What usually appeared as a homogeneous ethnic group, well organized for political action, was a group divided over

¹⁵⁷ The Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission did study educational administration and made recommendations about it, but these were passed over by the government for the reasons discussed in Chapter VII.

municipal reorganization. Without a tradition of political activity over civic issues, without rural-urban unity on the issue of municipal reorganization similar to ethnic unity over the issue of education, the French had neither the political organization nor the cause to oppose municipal reorganization. Only when municipal reorganization was regarded as a step toward amalgamation of school districts and a metropolitan school board, did the French residents of St. Boniface organize ad hoc groups to oppose metropolitan government. When this happened the movement for metro had gained such momentum, it could not be stopped by poorly organized groups, by an ethnic minority divided along rural-urban lines or by a city divided along ethnic lines.

When the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission began its work in 1955, however, the possibility of municipal reorganization seemed distant. The government that had a long tradition of non-party coalition type government was still in power and there was little political leadership for municipal reorganization from the mayor of Winnipeg. The mayor elected in the fall of 1954 had campaigned on the issue of municipal reorganization but had been silent about it since his election.¹⁵⁸ Even after the appointment of the Commission the inaction of the government had deadlocked the

¹⁵⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, July 6, 1955.

move for municipal reorganization. What eventually broke this deadlock was not the Report and Recommendations of the Commission nor the emergence of leadership from the mayor of the central city, but the clarification of party lines in provincial politics. When party lines became distinct again in the late 1950's and a rejuvenated Conservative party was elected in 1958, there was a restoration of party politics and cabinet government. The change from non-party to party politics ended the system of grass roots government that had preserved French ethnic autonomy and the autonomy of St. Boniface.

CHAPTER VII

A PARTY GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT: THE RECOGNITION OF ETHNIC AUTONOMY AND WEAK LOCAL AUTONOMY

The change from party to non-party politics in the mid 1950's increased the potential threat to the minority position of the French. In its first years in office, however, the Conservative government recognized the ethnic autonomy of the French but tended to disregard their local autonomy. This was reflected in the re-organization of governmental services undertaken by the Conservatives. The re-organization of educational services was completely removed from the plans for re-organizing other governmental services in the Greater Winnipeg area. With the removal of education, it was then possible to introduce extensive changes in the functions of municipal councils and to re-organize municipal administration without arousing the opposition of established ethnic-religious groups. Only when the introduction of metro legislation was imminent did the French formulate a coherent statement of the distinctiveness of their city. But opposition to municipal re-organization was weak, unorganized and mainly vocal.

The main concern of the French with municipal re-organization was its effect on education. As early as

January 1954, immediately after the Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee had reported, Larry Desjardins, a member of St. Boniface council, said that he wanted to know what metropolitan government would "do about the school board problem."¹⁵⁹ In his opinion this question had to be answered before St. Boniface council considered providing funds for the work of the Metropolitan Exploratory Committee.¹⁶⁰

The Conservative government recognized that the re-organization of education had to give due consideration to ethnic settlement if it was to be carried through without a political battle. The government, therefore, followed the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education while disregarding the recommendations on education made by the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission.

The Royal Commission on Education had reported that "a Metropolitan School Division for the Greater Winnipeg area...might introduce...economies, or improved services."¹⁶¹ If such improvements could be made, however, they could be provided by agreements between the boards of the local school districts. In the Winnipeg urban area:

¹⁵⁹ The Winnipeg Tribune, January 19, 1954.

¹⁶⁰ Loc. cit.

¹⁶¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Education, 1959, p. 25.

the School District of Winnipeg and several of the suburban school districts were...large enough to constitute efficient Divisions. To increase their size further would be a disadvantage administratively.¹⁶²

The Commission suggested that larger school districts, when established, should take into account social and religious differences.¹⁶³ Where new and larger districts were required the Commission proposed that the Provincial Boundaries Commission should define the boundaries of the districts.

After the Conservatives increased their majority in the provincial election of 1959, the government ordered the Boundaries Commission to investigate the problem of school district boundaries and instructed it to take account of ethnic populations. When the recommendations of the boundary commission appointed by the government were received, the government, which had supported the formation of larger school districts during the election campaign, offered financial support for districts voting in favor of consolidation.¹⁶⁴ The government had cleared the way for municipal re-organization by first settling the question of educational policy and had thus removed "the greatest block to metropolitan government."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Loc. cit.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶⁴ M. S. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁶⁵ Winnipeg Free Press, November 4, 1959.

In removing education as a problem of municipal re-organization, the government had recognized the ethnic autonomy of the French but had ignored the rationale underlying the recommendations of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission. In this Commission's report educational re-organization was considered as "vital to the success of any reform of municipal institutions in the Metropolitan area."¹⁶⁶ But educational and municipal re-organization were to be complementary. To provide adequate school accommodation and assistance to education, the Commission suggested the utilization of "all local financial resources in the area, regardless of their distribution among the existing local municipalities."¹⁶⁷ To achieve this the Commission recommended that a Metropolitan Council should provide the funds.¹⁶⁸ The French school board in St. Boniface was to continue in existence but it was to draw its money from a metro council rather than the council of St. Boniface.¹⁶⁹

The central idea underlying the recommendations of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission was that the Winnipeg urban area was one interdependent economic unit.

¹⁶⁶ Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, op. cit., 1959, Vol. I, p. 254.

¹⁶⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 258.

While this idea had underlain the recommendations of the Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee, the French were slow to develop arguments against it. Criticism of the idea of economic unity did not really develop until after the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission had made its report, and it was apparent that the Conservative majority intended to implement some of the Commission's recommendations without a referendum. Opposition to metro began to develop in cultural terms when a metro form of government became a likely possibility and was articulated in the submissions made by St. Boniface council to the Commission and to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The Brief submitted to the Commission was short and did not distinguish the French of St. Boniface from other ethnic groups in the city. The Brief referred to bilingualism as "a distinction rarely found elsewhere"¹⁷⁰ but tended to consider "the people" of St. Boniface rather than the French, and their culture and religion. Consideration of the St. Boniface school system did not distinguish French interests from other ethnic interests. In the Brief, it was claimed that St. Boniface understood and appreciated the existing school system and that the citizens valued "this important utility." The people of St. Boniface had come to

¹⁷⁰ "Brief submitted to the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission for and on behalf of the City of St. Boniface," p. 4.

a "harmonious understanding" about the school system which had "been strengthened over the years....Under no consideration would the citizens agree to be submerged in a larger school scheme."¹⁷¹ The councillors of St. Boniface in framing this Brief were less concerned with establishing the linguistic, religious, ethnic and historical uniqueness of the city than in preventing the extension of Winnipeg. Winnipeg had "reached its boundaries" and its expansion could not be into St. Boniface but would have to be:

south, west and north. Its eastern boundary is the Red River which brings to a dead end all forms of municipal expansion.¹⁷²

In contrast to this Brief, the Submission made after the report of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission had been published was more assertive of the cultural and historical distinctiveness of the French in St. Boniface. This Submission was made during a series of meetings between the municipalities and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The Submission referred to many of the historical facts mentioned in the Report and Recommendations of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, stated that the development of St. Boniface had been parallel to that of Winnipeg, and claimed that St. Boniface was "second to none in

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 3.

historical origin."¹⁷³ The large concentration of French speaking Canadians in St. Boniface had made the city:

a remarkable site of great religious institutions, the center of French Canadian culture in Western Canada, the natural rallying point of the French Canadian population.¹⁷⁴

The Submission to the Minister, unlike the Brief to the Commission, distinguished the French from other segments of the St. Boniface population and asserted that "the French presence" coloured "the thinking of all and gives the city a unique personality."¹⁷⁵

While the Submission emphasized that the uniqueness of St. Boniface derived from the historical roots and concentrated population of the French, it did not identify French ethnic autonomy with local autonomy. Local autonomy was necessary not to protect the historical and ethnic distinctiveness of the French but for the "maintenance of a reasonable degree of harmony within the community and resistance to disturbing, clumsy or hostile pressures from without."¹⁷⁶ The Submission implied that an attempt to amalgamate St. Boniface would endanger the internal harmony

¹⁷³ Submission to the Honourable the Minister of Municipal Affairs of the Province of Manitoba by the Council of the City of St. Boniface, p. 2, emphasis in text.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 4, emphasis in text.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

of the city and possibly have "similar repercussions on the provincial and national level."¹⁷⁷

St. Boniface council recognized that some form of reorganization of municipal services was necessary but in 1959 was unwilling to accept proposals more radical than those made by the Manitoba Provincial-Municipal Committee in 1953. The council would accept an inter-municipal board to co-ordinate the administration of services already under joint control or special districts.¹⁷⁸ The board was to be composed of representatives from the "constituent Municipal Councils on the basis of population"¹⁷⁹ but the authority of the board was to be limited to certain "areas of action" which excluded welfare and education.¹⁸⁰ There was to be no "infringement on the powers of presently constituted councils and... no disturbances of the recently reorganized school system."¹⁸¹

By late 1959, therefore, the members of St. Boniface council, if not the French residents of the city, had begun to articulate reasons for maintaining the autonomy of the

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, November 4, 1959.

¹⁷⁹ Submission to the Minister, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸¹ Loc. cit.

city. According to the Submission to the Minister whenever administration bore a:

relationship to a specific community and...was affected by the characteristics proper to that community, local autonomy should be the rule.¹⁸²

St. Boniface, claimed Alderman Appleby, when he presented this brief, was "unalterably opposed...to a system of metropolitan government which would eliminate much...local autonomy."¹⁸³

When the meetings between the municipalities and the provincial government ended on November 6, 1959, the position of the Conservative government was made explicit. The municipalities would not meet again under government auspices in order to present proposals about municipal reorganization. St. Boniface and the other municipalities had been given the opportunity to reach an agreement on proposals which the government would have tried to fit into an overall plan.¹⁸⁴ As the municipalities had continued to disagree, the government would initiate its own plan. The Premier, who had twice said that he wanted a referendum on metro,¹⁸⁵ was now in a position to act without a referendum.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁸³ Winnipeg Free Press, November 4, 1959.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., June 6, 1959.

¹⁸⁵ Loc. cit.

A metro bill would be introduced in the legislature and the municipalities could make submissions about the bill before the Law Amendments Committee of the legislature.¹⁸⁶ When the bill was introduced, the government stated it would listen to suggested changes in the bill except on planning and central control of essential services.¹⁸⁷

French political groups which should have been most concerned about the autonomy of St. Boniface were neither opposed to the bill nor prepared for the initiative taken by the cabinet. The change from non-party to party politics had ended the notion of grass roots democracy prevalent in the early 1950's. A resort to the grass roots by means of a referendum could only be undertaken on single issues which concerned "the individual morality or conscience."¹⁸⁸ As the metro bill involved "200 odd sections, each of which might concern the individual morality or conscience" no referendum was possible.¹⁸⁹ It was clear that the government could be influenced by minority groups only if they were united on particular issues and organized to articulate their

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., November 6, 1959.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., February 17, 1960.

¹⁸⁸ Hon. S. R. Lyon, Attorney-General, Manitoba Legislative Assembly, Debates and Proceedings, March 21, 1960, p. 1805.

¹⁸⁹ Loc. cit.

interests. The French were unorganized over the issue of metropolitan government and those groups that were organized over education were divided along urban-rural lines. Opposition to the bill had to come from elected representatives, particularly the mayor and M. L. A. from St. Boniface, and from unorganized groups lacking tradition, influence, and effective leadership.

French opposition to the metropolitan form of municipal government would have been most effective if it had been led by the mayor of the city. The French, however, had begun to lose control of this office in 1911 when English speaking Thomas Berry was elected. English and French mayors were elected for alternate terms from 1911 to 1924 but after the 1924 election non-French mayors were consistently elected. The French could not retain control of the mayor's office as the French population declined relative to the populations of other ethnic groups. By the late 1950's, when metropolitan government appeared imminent, the emotional commitment to political organization for education had contributed to French indifference about the election of a mayor of French origin. In 1959 when the Report and Recommendations of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission was presented, the mayor of St. Boniface was a French speaking Belgian, J. G. Van Belleghem.

Although he had some electoral support from the

French both in municipal and in provincial elections, Mayor Van Belleghem could not be the focal point of French opposition to metropolitan government. Nor was it possible for him to be the leader of city wide opposition to metropolitan government. While the idea of a metropolitan form of government was crystalizing, Mayor Van Belleghem was serving as a member of the Commission which recommended metropolitan government. He could not play a double role while the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission was doing its work and when its report was presented he repeatedly endorsed it. Not only did he think that the report was acceptable, he thought it would be adopted.¹⁹⁰ While he endorsed the eight city concept of the report and the recommendation for a metro council which would have financed the school board operations of St. Boniface, he refused to accept the long term implications of the report. Several newspaper comments had indicated that metropolitan government would mean eventual amalgamation but Mayor Van Belleghem maintained that there was "a natural division, physically and culturally at the... Red river."¹⁹¹ St. Boniface, according to Mayor Van Belleghem would "not submit without a fight to

¹⁹⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, April 2, 1959; Winnipeg Tribune, June 18, 1959. His support of the Commission's report was expressed on June 23, 1959 in the Winnipeg Free Press.

¹⁹¹ Winnipeg Tribune, June 18, 1959.

being absorbed or amalgamated."¹⁹²

Mayor Van Belleghem's opposition to total amalgamation diverted attention from the real issue of metropolitan government. By October 1958, when he attacked total amalgamation, the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission had decided that total amalgamation was not feasible. He weakened political opposition to metropolitan government not only by directing attention toward the non-issue of total amalgamation but also by supporting the initiative taken by the Conservative government. The provincial government, said Mayor Van Belleghem, had accepted its responsibility in introducing the metro bill and it was "to their credit that they are not attempting to veer away from Metro."¹⁹³ By supporting the action of the government in reducing the autonomy of his own council he set himself apart from those residents who attacked the Conservative government for being dictatorial.

Over municipal reorganization there were considerable differences between Van Belleghem's position and the positions of other elected officials and political groups concerned about education. By endorsing the Report, the Mayor accepted the premise that the Winnipeg urban area was one economic or

¹⁹² Winnipeg Free Press, October 28, 1958.

¹⁹³ Winnipeg Tribune, February 17, 1960.

commercial unity. The Submission to the Minister made by St. Boniface council claimed that this "basic concept...that the Greater Winnipeg area... was one single community...was unsound."¹⁹⁴ Mayor Van Belleghem also accepted the recommendation that a metro council should raise the money for education. On the point of council controls over school board expenditures, Van Belleghem wanted greater controls than the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission Report had suggested. It was his

opinion that eventually a stricter form of control must be brought in to keep school boards in line. It seems, however, that the provincial government realizes this.¹⁹⁵

The St. Boniface school trustees severely criticized the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission's recommendations on education.¹⁹⁶ St. Boniface council opposed any reduction in local control over funds that was implied in the Metro Council recommendation. "Localized control over revenue and expenditure, was the final test of real political power."¹⁹⁷

The differences between Van Belleghem and other elected officials was evident when Robert Bockstael, the

¹⁹⁴ Winnipeg Free Press, November 4, 1959.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., February 17, 1960.

¹⁹⁶ Winnipeg Tribune, September 26, 1959.

¹⁹⁷ Submission to the Minister, op. cit., p. 4.

chairman of the St. Boniface school board in 1959, protested against the recommendations of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission Report. In October 1959 Bockstael asked St. Boniface council to meet with a citizens committee which wanted to express its opinion about metropolitan government.¹⁹⁸ At the meeting some sixty people were present and Bockstael presented their case. He asked council to reject the eight city plan recommended by the Commission.¹⁹⁹ He was particularly concerned about the recommendations for eight local school boards with boundaries coterminus with the proposed eight cities. This reorganization of school boards should be rejected so that the reorganization of school districts made in early 1959 could "be given an opportunity to prove themselves."²⁰⁰ The brief of the citizens committee claimed that the recommendations on education made by the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission would not provide any further improvement unforeseen in the 1959 school legislation.²⁰¹ As this group's opposition to metropolitan government showed, concern over education prompted political activity. When the recommendations made

¹⁹⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1959.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., October 31, 1959.

²⁰⁰ Loc. cit.

²⁰¹ Loc. cit.

on education by the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission were ignored by the government, opposition to metropolitan government was left to another disorganized and ineffectively led group.

This group was led by a St. Boniface insurance agent, George Forest, and its protest against the metro bill was made by marching to the Legislative Building while the Law Amendments Committee of the Legislature was meeting. Forest presented a brief to the Committee in which he claimed there was no need for a metropolitan form of government. If such a government was formed, he thought that St. Boniface should be excluded.²⁰² The protest and Forest's presentation had no effect in preventing the passage of the metro bill. When the bill was passed Forest said the French people of St. Boniface had "been lulled into an attitude of 'there's nothing we can do about it'."²⁰³ Group opposition to the bill had developed too late to be effective in stopping the bill from becoming law or in securing the exclusion of St. Boniface from the metro scheme.

As the mayor was unwilling to oppose the metro scheme and the political groups were either unconcerned or ineffective, Larry Desjardins, the provincial member from

²⁰² Winnipeg Tribune, March 9, 1960.

²⁰³ Winnipeg Free Press, March 24, 1960

St. Boniface was left with the task of opposing the metro bill in the Legislature. As he was of French origin, his position on the metro scheme was different from that of the Belgian Van Belleghem. Desjardins claimed that the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission "forgot the problems of St. Boniface."²⁰⁴ Desjardins apparently had the support of the Forest group for he congratulated them on the brief presented to the Law Amendments Committee. The protest made by the group had filled him "with pride and emotion."²⁰⁵

The speeches made by Desjardins in the Legislature during the debate revealed the attitude of the French toward the metro scheme. Desjardins claimed that if the metro bill became law, it would lead to total amalgamation.²⁰⁶ This, in turn, would mean interference with education. Although the metro bill did not involve major changes in the administration or financing of education, Desjardins pointed out that education and metro government should be completely separated.²⁰⁷

Desjardins moved several amendments to the metro bill but as it did not include clauses infringing on the ethnic

²⁰⁴ Manitoba Legislative Assembly, Debates and Proceedings, February 25, 1960, p. 912.

²⁰⁵ Winnipeg Free Press, March 9, 1960.

²⁰⁶ Debates and Proceedings, ibid., p. 911.

²⁰⁷ Loc. cit.

autonomy of the French he had little organized support for these amendments outside the Legislature. The major amendments he moved to the bill would have removed St. Boniface from the jurisdiction of metropolitan government²⁰⁸ and would have prevented any services not provided for in the bill from being "taken over by the Metro Council without the unanimous consent of the member municipality."²⁰⁹

When the House defeated these amendments and passed the bill with a majority of 41, Desjardins claimed that the government had "bribed" St. Boniface by changing the name of the new government to "The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg" and by changing the qualifications for candidates for metro council to provide for those who were "able to read the English or French language."²¹⁰ Desjardins had wanted the "or French" phrase deleted because it was no real concession to the French in St. Boniface, even though "it recognized and respected the rights of the French people."²¹¹ Desjardins' remarks about the "or French" phrase indicated the difference between French ethnic and local autonomy. In effect, he praised the provision because it

²⁰⁸ Ibid., March 18, 1960, p. 1745.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 1757.

²¹⁰ Winnipeg Tribune, March 22, 1960.

²¹¹ Debates and Proceedings, March 18, 1960, p. 1756.

recognized the French language but criticized the amendment because it could not be effective.

In the metropolitan area the French were a minority and unless the electoral boundaries of the metropolitan electoral divisions were coincident with the predominantly French areas of St. Boniface, the French would be unlikely to elect ethnic representatives. The Metropolitan Winnipeg Act, however, was drafted in a way that prevented the French from obtaining control over a division. The Act laid down that:

For electoral purposes the metropolitan area is divided into ten metropolitan divisions, each of which shall comprise such part of the metropolitan area as may be prescribed by order of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council after receipt of a report...from the Electoral Boundaries Commission....²¹²

Each metro electoral division was to include nearly equal numbers of electors and "contain portions of two or more area municipalities."²¹³ "...in five divisions a majority of the electors" were to be "residents in the City of Winnipeg and in the other five divisions a majority of the electors" were not to be Winnipeg residents.²¹⁴ When the Electoral Boundaries Commission reported, the area of greatest French concentration in St. Boniface was included in what became

²¹² Metropolitan Winnipeg Act, 1960, Sec. 9 (1).

²¹³ Ibid., Sec. 9 (6) (c) (i).

²¹⁴ Ibid., Sec. 9 (6) (d).

Metropolitan Electoral Divisions 6 and 7. These Divisions also included the predominantly English speaking areas of East Kildonan, Transcona and Winnipeg. The provisions of Section 9 and the boundaries established by the Commission prevented the French from returning an ethnic representative to the metropolitan council.

Although the French residents in St. Boniface were virtually denied ethnic representation on the metropolitan council, the provision qualifying unilingual French speaking people for nomination for metropolitan elections enabled the Conservative government to claim that the distinctiveness of the French had been recognized. By making this provision and by excluding education from the problem of municipal reorganization, the government was able to reduce French control and administration without arousing the opposition of ethnic political groups. These functions were to be taken over by a new metropolitan government controlled by non-French representatives but the Premier could claim that the bill would not "destroy the character of the French-speaking community of St. Boniface and Manitoba."²¹⁵ The special character of St. Boniface was acknowledged in the legislation for the metropolitan government and "the values represented

²¹⁵ Debates and Proceedings, February 29, 1960, p. 1043.

by that community" were to be retained.²¹⁶ The vigour and self confidence of the French had enabled them, as the Premier claimed, to deal with whatever threatened this character.²¹⁷ But the local political organization of the French did not enable them to prevent the formation of a metropolitan government which they accepted even if reluctantly.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 1047.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1043.

CHAPTER VIII

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT AND ETHNIC SURVIVAL

The metro bill was assented to on March 26, 1960. It provided for a Metropolitan Corporation and for the creation of metropolitan electoral divisions. The French were indifferent to these provisions but in the fall of 1961 interest in St. Boniface municipal elections was greater than it had been for decades.²¹⁸ This interest derived from the growing concern of the French that the Metropolitan Corporation might lead to a future metropolitan government that would be involved in the administration of education for St. Boniface. This concern became evident in the speeches of the mayor of St. Boniface elected in the fall of 1960 and in the briefs submitted to the Metropolitan Review Commission in 1963.

The Metropolitan Winnipeg Act provided that control over certain municipal streets, over planning, transit, water supply and sewage disposal, and some other municipal functions should be exercised by operational departments responsible to an appointed chairman and elected council of the Metropolitan Corporation. The Metropolitan council had the power

²¹⁸ The turnout in Ward 2 was nearly 60% according to the Winnipeg Free Press, October 23, 1961.

to "levy against the area municipalities" to acquire funds to pay for the costs which metro could not finance.²¹⁹ The French apparently had no objection to the loss of control over these functions, although after the Corporation assumed control of various functions there were complaints about metro services raising taxes.

While there was no significant opposition to the Corporation assuming the functions of the civic administration of the city or to the divisions of St. Boniface for purposes of metro elections, the French mayor elected in 1960 began to identify the cultural distinctiveness of St. Boniface with the municipal affairs of the city. Joseph Guay won the 1960 mayoralty election after conducting a campaign based on the idea of "a bi-lingual government for a bi-lingual city."²²⁰ Bi-lingualism, according to Guay, was what was needed "to preserve St. Boniface's identity under the new metro government."²²¹ During his terms in office he voiced his opposition to the Metropolitan Corporation although not to the metro idea. He wanted "neither metro as it is nor amalgamation."²²²

²¹⁹ Metropolitan Winnipeg Act, 1960, Sec. 35.

²²⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1960.

²²¹ Quoted in loc. cit.

²²² Ibid., June 1, 1962.

When the Metropolitan Review Commission investigated the functioning of the Corporation, Mayor Guay reiterated the arguments for retaining the autonomy of St. Boniface, which were contained in the St. Boniface Submission to the Minister in 1959, but he carried the arguments one step further by identifying the cultural values of the French with the existence and function of the city council. The brief he presented began with a statement of the position of St. Boniface that was similar to briefs it had previously submitted, and then indicated the need for a local council:

the people of St. Boniface have consistently sought to express the character of their City through political and educational institutions delicately attuned to religious, linguistic, cultural and ethnic balances in the community in accordance with the great principles of Confederation in a bilingual, bicultural country. The maintenance of true harmony within the community depends absolutely on the prerequisite of local autonomous self-government, on the operation of City Council, and two School Boards and on localized fiscal control which ultimately constitutes real political power.²²³

While St. Boniface was "prepared to work within the existing framework of metropolitan government"²²⁴ it wanted no further diminution of the functions of its council. Unlike previous submissions, the brief presented by Guay was more explicit

²²³ St. Boniface Brief to the Metropolitan Review Commission, 1963, p. 2, emphasis added, cf. Submission to the Honourable The Minister of Municipal Affairs of the Province of Manitoba by the Council of the City of St. Boniface, p. 4.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

in identifying the council with the values of St. Boniface.

The retention of historical values rests largely on the retention of municipal corporations. The City of St. Boniface takes pride in being known as 'le capitale française de l'ouest.'²²⁵

The identity of these historical values with the municipal corporation was implicit in the brief presented to the Review Commission by l'Association d'Education. L'Association had not made submissions to either the Metropolitan Sub-committee or to the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission. Until 1963 investigations of municipal urban affairs had not concerned l'Association. In its brief to the Review Commission, however, l'Association claimed:

qu'une amalgamation totale des municipalités canadiennes-françaises de la région de Winnipeg et tout spécialement de la Ville de St. Boniface, à la Ville de Winnipeg, sous la férule d'un gouvernement métropolitain, serait de nature à nuire au développement de notre group ethnique, et à l'épanouissement de la culture française chez nous....²²⁶

If the cultural and ethnic values of the French in St. Boniface had been as closely identified with the civic institutions of the city as was implied in the briefs presented by Mayor Guay and the secretary of l'Association, the introduction of the legislation for metropolitan government would have aroused more opposition. The French accepted

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

²²⁶ René Rottiers, Secrétaire général pour l'Association d'Education.

a metro form of government because ethnic and cultural values were not identified with civic institutions. The development of the legal and administrative relationships between the municipalities and the province, the importance of provincial government in assisting the French to attain status equal to the English and in controlling educational policy, made provincial institutions the focus of ethnic interests.

It was the educational issue, however, that made provincial institutions seem more important for the French than municipal institutions. The changes in education policy in 1890 and 1916 were controversial, but the French became committed to the issue of education because of the leadership of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. As a result of this leadership, the French were organized on a regional basis and education became the symbol of ethnic autonomy. This regional organization and this symbol of autonomy, weakened the local autonomy of the French. Political organization included rural and urban elements disunited over urban issues such as municipal reorganization and lacking a symbol of municipal independence such as "home rule". Without political organization composed of urban members and without symbols of municipal autonomy, the French had no political base to effectively oppose metropolitan government. Religious leadership emphasized the importance of provincial

institutions rather than municipal institutions and made education rather than municipal independence the symbol of French autonomy.

Education as a symbol of autonomy and regional political organization have been significant in the past for the survival of the French as an ethnic group. In the future, however, this symbol of autonomy and this organization relying on rural support may be ineffective. As rural-urban migration continues and as social, economic and technological changes increase the rate and extent of urbanization, new forms of municipal government will be influenced by local and urban political groups. The French in St. Boniface, therefore, will be required to develop local groups and evolve symbols of local autonomy if increasing urbanization is not to result in ethnic assimilation.

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