

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE TRANSFER OF ELECTORAL ALLEGIANCE IN ETHNIC POLITICS: A  
STUDY OF THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF FRANCO-MANITOBANS 1969-1974

by

PAUL BEAULIEU

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	i
LIST OF TABLES .....	iii
PREFACE .....	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER TWO: THE FRENCH VOTE IN MANITOBA: 1969-1973 .....	11
CHAPTER THREE: THE 1969 ST. BONIFACE ELECTION .....	28
CHAPTER FOUR: THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE ELECTIONS, 1969-1973 .....	39
CHAPTER FIVE: THE 1973 ST. BONIFACE ELECTION .....	54
CHAPTER SIX: THE 1974 ST. BONIFACE BY-ELECTION .....	65
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE 1974 ST. BONIFACE FEDERAL ELECTION .....	80
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION .....	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	85
APPENDIX A: EMERSON, LA VERENDRYE, SPRINGFIELD, STE. ROSE:	
1969 AND 1973 .....	90
APPENDIX B: ST. BONIFACE, ST. VITAL, FORT GARRY, 1969 AND 1973..	91
APPENDIX C: ST. BONIFACE, 1969 AND 1973 .....	92
APPENDIX D: ST. BONIFACE, 1974.....	93

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
2.1	Manitoba Election Results: 1966-1973 .....	12
2.2	The French Vote in Manitoba: 1969-1973 ..... ..	13
2.3	The 1969 and 1973 Manitoba Elections: Urban and Rural ...	13
2.4	The French Vote in Rural Manitoba: 1969-1973 .....	14
2.5	The French Vote in Urban Manitoba: 1969-1973 .....	15
2.6	The Elderly Vote in Predominantly French Polls: 1969-1974.	16
2.7	French Candidates and MLA's in Manitoba: 1966-1974 .....	17
2.8	The French Vote in Fort Garry: 1969-1973 .....	19
2.9	The French Vote in St. Vital: 1969-1973 .....	21
2.10	The French Vote in La Verendrye: 1969-1973 .....	22
2.11	The French Vote in Ste. Rose: 1969-1973 .....	23
2.12	The French Vote in Springfield: 1969-1973 .....	25
2.13	The French Vote in Emerson: 1969-1973 .....	26
3.1	St. Boniface Elections: 1953-1974 .....	30
3.2	The 1966 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote .....	36
3.3	The 1969 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote .....	37
3.4	The 1969 St. Boniface Election: Income .....	37
5.1	The 1973 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote .....	63
5.2	The 1973 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote Changes .....	63
5.3	The 1973 St. Boniface Election: Income .....	64
6.1	The 1974 St. Boniface By-Election: Party Vote .....	76
6.2	The 1974 St. Boniface By-Election: Party Vote Change ....	77
6.3	The 1974 St. Boniface By-Election: Income .....	78
6.4	St. Boniface 1969-1974: The Spearman Rank Coefficient ...	79

## LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)

TABLE	PAGE
7.1 The 1974 St. Boniface Federal Election: Party Vote	
Change .....	80
7.2. The 1974 St. Boniface Federal Election: Income .....	81
7.3 The 1974 St. Boniface Federal Election: Conservative	
Vote Change .....	82

## PREFACE

Manitoba in 1896 was a newer Ontario, with a little Quebec stretching out to the south and east of St. Boniface. It was as though a mischievous god, amused and disgusted at the racial intolerance along the St. Lawrence, had been unable to resist the temptation of planting a Protestant Ontario majority and a Catholic Quebec minority on the other side of the Canadian Shield so that he could see what effect prairie winds would have on the old antagonism between the two groups.

In the last eighty years the French minority in Manitoba has undergone several changes which have transformed it from merely 'a little Quebec' in the west.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps none is as unusual or intriguing as its recent political changes. Only a few years ago the French appeared to be a politically traditional ethnic group indisposed to any form of socialism or left-wing politics. In the early 1970's, however, this group evidently transferred its political allegiance, at least provincially, to the New Democratic Party. Apparently, its desire to advance its ethnic interests edged out its customary distrust of a socialist party. The interesting question is what peculiar 'prairie winds' created by that 'mischievous god' produced this unexpected change.

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<sup>1</sup>E.G. Cooke, 'The Federal Election of 1896 in Manitoba', M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, April, 1943, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>For stylistic reasons, French Canadians in Manitoba will be generally referred to in this paper as the French.

## CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

Voting behaviour has long been a complex and fascinating subject. Numerous studies have attempted to analyze the relative importance of such variables as policy issues, party affiliation, candidate preference and socioeconomic status. These studies have variously assigned greater weight to one or another factor or to a combination of certain factors. But no single systematic theory has yet proven to be totally adequate.

The influence of ethnicity on voting has likewise been assigned varying importance. On the one hand, its inevitable demise is predicted; while on the other, it is judged to persist as an important influence through several generations, indeed, if not indefinitely. Part of the reason for the continuing disagreement over its effect is that no universally accepted definition of ethnicity exists. One study indicates no less than twenty-seven distinct definitions.<sup>1</sup> Usually, however, the general concept of ethnicity includes one or more of three related elements: religion, language and national origin. It is in this sense that the term will be used here.

Ethnic politics exists whenever 'ethnicity is an important consideration in the decisions made by voters and politicians.'<sup>2</sup> Ethnic voting exists whenever there is 'the tendency for members of a particular ethnic group to support one party or the other, and the tendency for some members of an ethnic group to cross party lines to vote for a

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<sup>1</sup>W.W. Isajiw, 'Definitions of Ethnicity', in Ethnicity, Vol. 1, No. 2, July, 1974, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>R.E. Wolfinger, 'Some Consequences of Ethnic Politics', in L.H. Zeigler and M.K. Jennings, eds., The Electoral Process, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966, p. 43.



fellow ethnic.'<sup>3</sup> It occurs when all or most members of an ethnic group have a strong bloc preference for one political party or for a fellow ethnic candidate, regardless of party lines. An ethnic voter may vote for a party because it is believed to best represent the interests and concerns of the voter's ethnic group or for a candidate because he has a similar ethnic background.<sup>4</sup>

In ethnic politics a political party attempts to win and retain the electoral support of an ethnic group through a process of exchanging 'recognition' for votes. This recognition is subjective and imprecise. It has been described as 'the prestige that accrues to a nationality group when one of its members is elected to public office.'<sup>5</sup> Thus, a party tends to win the ethnic vote by appointing or electing ethnic leaders to prominent positions. If successful, this strategy provides symbolic recognition for the ethnic group. With respect to American voters of Italian descent, this process has been described as follows:

...When one Italian was appointed to a public position his success was enjoyed vicariously by other Italians; it was 'recognition' of the worth of the Italians.... It was unnecessary to do a favor for every individual to win<sub>6</sub> his vote. Rewards given to the few were appreciated by the many.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> R.E. Wolfinger, 'The Development and Persistence of Ethnic Voting', in L.H. Fuchs, ed., American Ethnic Politics, New York: Harper and Row, 1968, p. 165.

<sup>5</sup> E.C. Banfield and J.Q. Wilson, City Politics, New York: Random House, Inc., 1963, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Wolfinger, 'Ethnic Politics', pp. 46-47.

Because several parties may compete for ethnic votes by offering such recognition, a party maintains an ethnic allegiance only if it also presents programs, policies and attitudes that generally correspond to the overall interests of that ethnic group.

Two models attempt to explain the basis for an ethnic political affiliation.<sup>7</sup> The sociohistorical model asserts that an ethnic group's electoral attachment to a particular party may be the result of some past historical experience. This may be an election in which an ethnic group first became involved and identified with a particular party. This identification may then persist for many elections. For example, William C. Celentano, who won the Republican nomination for mayor in 1939 in New Haven, was the first Italian to win either party's nomination for a major office and established a persistent Republican preference among the city's Italians.<sup>8</sup>

The second model emphasizes rationality more than tradition. It claims that an electoral alliance between a political party and an ethnic group is largely created and maintained by shared interests. Thus, an ethnic group supports the party that tends to promote the ethnic interests of that group and the party does so because of that group's electoral support. A classic case of this ethnic voting is the electoral alliance of French Canadians in Quebec with the federal Liberal party. In 1891 their allegiance transferred from the Conservatives to the Liberals.

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<sup>7</sup>D.J. Schnall, Ethnicity and Suburban Local Politics, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975, pp. 127-128.

<sup>8</sup>Wolfinger, 'Ethnic Voting', p. 177.

Since that time Quebec has only once failed to return a majority, and frequently an overwhelming majority, of Liberal members.<sup>9</sup> In return, Quebec received certain alleged benefits, such as the government's less stringent conscription policy during the second world war and the current bilingualism policy; although some in Quebec may well argue that the 'benefits' secured by the province have not been commensurate with its contribution.

In Manitoba a similar ethnic bloc allegiance has existed. From the province's formation in 1870, the French generally supported the ruling party. Indeed, their 'one constant characteristic' has been said to be a 'desire to protect their minority interests through cooperation with the government of the day'.<sup>10</sup> In the early decades, French Catholic districts generally supported the governments, first of Marc Girard and later John Norquay, which were mainly Conservative. In 1888 they switched their allegiance to the new Liberal government of Thomas Greenway. After a brief period of protest against the Manitoba Schools legislation,<sup>11</sup> they returned to the Liberals in 1899, evidently in the

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<sup>9</sup> R.M. Dawson, The Government of Canada, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970, 5th ed., Revised by N. Ward, p. 429.

<sup>10</sup> R. Turenne, 'The Minority and the Ballot Box: A Study of the Voting Behaviour of the French Canadians of Manitoba 1888-1967', M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, September, 1969, p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> In 1890 the Greenway government established a system of non-denominational schools administered by local boards of trustees and a Department of Education. Religious exercises in the public schools were permitted, though not required, under defined conditions. Intense controversy followed with the French community registering its strong opposition to these changes. See R.E. Clague, 'The Political Aspects of the Manitoba School Question 1890-96', M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1939; L.C. Clark; ed., The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights?, Toronto: Copp Clark, 1968. P. Crunican, Priests and Politicians: Manitoba Schools and the Election of 1896, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

expectation that the Liberal government would be returned. However, they soon switched to supporting the new Conservative government under Rodmond Roblin. With the latter's defeat in 1915, they again switched first to the Liberals and later to the Progressives after John Bracken became premier in 1922. During the long 'non-partisan' era from 1923 to 1957, they continued to support the party in office. By 1958 their political allegiance was securely committed to the ruling Liberal-Progressive Party.<sup>12</sup>

After the 1958 election of a Conservative government under Duff Roblin, however, the French evidently broke with this tradition of supporting the party in power. They remained loyal to the Liberals. Roblin's inability to undermine the strong French Liberal support appears to have been partly due, after 1961, to the presence of Gildas Molgat, a French businessman from Winnipeg who became the Liberal leader after the 1961 leadership convention.<sup>13</sup> By voting for Molgat as a fellow ethnic, the group demonstrated classic ethnic political behaviour. But it also demonstrated a new willingness to vote against the governing party.

This break with tradition was accompanied by other changes occurring within the French community. To a degree these changes corresponded with the changes in Quebec which have come to be known as the Quiet Revolution. It appears that some of these new Quebec attitudes began influencing the French minority in Manitoba after 1964. That year

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<sup>12</sup>Turenne, op.cit., p. 137.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 154-155.

saw the establishment of l'Association Québec-Manitoba to foster closer cultural links between the two French peoples. Later the same year, the St. Boniface Courier, a new bilingual weekly newspaper, began expressing anti-clerical and anti-authoritarian criticism of traditional values and attitudes. The eventual secularization of C.K.S.B., the local French radio station, and La Liberté et le Patriote, a weekly French newspaper, appeared to reflect this climate of change and to promote a spirit of self-renewal. The presence of federal social animators seemed to influence the younger and apparently more progressive element in the community to question its long-held values. As a result, in June of 1968 some three hundred delegates met in Winnipeg at a Rallye du Manitoba français to bring about 'a complete renewal of the leadership and the institutional structures of the French-Canadian group in Manitoba'.<sup>14</sup> This congress led directly to the creation in December of 1968 of La Société Franco-Manitobaine. It replaced the Association d'Education des Canadiens-français du Manitoba, the most important French organization concerned with every facet of the group's cultural, linguistic and political life since 1916. Indeed, 'a 'new wave' or 'rebirth' of Franco-Manitoban society seemed to be under way.'<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, Manitoba politics was also being transformed. In 1969 the New Democratic Party, led by Edward Schreyer, was elected to power. After four controversial years, the Schreyer government was reelected to a

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<sup>14</sup>R. Hébert and J.-G. Vaillancourt, 'French-Canadians in Manitoba: Elites and Ideologies', in J.L. Elliott, ed., Immigrant Groups-2, Scarborough; Prentice-Hall, 1971, p. 176.

<sup>15</sup>Turenne, op.cit., p. 166.

second term in 1973. Through this period, the Liberal party declined markedly. Its share of the popular vote dropped from 33 per cent in 1966 to 24 per cent in 1969, and in 1973 it further declined to less than 19 per cent. By the latter date, it retained only three secure seats out of a total of fifty-seven in the legislature.<sup>16</sup> These results led one commentator to conclude that 'the Manitoba Liberals have never been as badly off as they are today'.<sup>17</sup> Within this context, the traditional alliance between the French and the Liberals deteriorated. David Smith claimed that 'where once the Liberals had maintained close ties with Manitoba's French Canadian population, by 1969 even that pillar of support had begun to disintegrate'.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, a study of the 1969 election suggested that some French voters switched from the Liberals to the N.D.P.<sup>19</sup> The purpose here will be to determine how far this switching occurred and why.

To find out how the French voted seven provincial ridings were analyzed. These were St. Boniface, St. Vital, Fort Garry, Springfield, Emerson, La Verendrye and Ste. Rose. Each contained a relatively high proportion of French voters, as determined from census reports and voters' lists. In each poll, the French presence was calculated by dividing the total number of French names on the voters' list by the total number of names on the list. The polls were then ranked according

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<sup>16</sup>All electoral data are taken from the official unpublished reports of the Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Manitoba.

<sup>17</sup>J. Wilson, 'The decline of the Liberal party in Manitoba Politics', in Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. X, No.1, Feb., 1975, p. 26.

<sup>18</sup>D. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan 1905-71, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, pp. 331-332.

<sup>19</sup>T. Peterson and P. Barber, 'Some Factors in the 1969 NDP Victory in Manitoba', in Lakehead University Review, Vol.3, No.2, 1970, pp.129-130.

to their percentage concentration of French voters:\*

Group 1: 80-100%	Group 4: 20-40%
Group 2: 60-80%	Group 5: 0-20%
Group 3: 40-60%	

Unfortunately, this procedure could not take into account either judicial revisions to the voters' lists or name alterations, because such information was unavailable. But these omissions were numerically slight, amounting in the former case to only 1.2 per cent of the registered vote in the seven ridings studied. The changes in the latter case would also appear to be quite small. One study, using similar methods, concluded that 'using ethnic surnames as a basis for determining nationality seems generally valid...(and) is not invalidated by the degree of misidentification incurred'.<sup>20</sup> In addition, when the percentage of French in the 'Ethnic Origin' category of the 1971 St. Boniface Census Tracts was compared with the percentage on the corresponding voters' lists, only a small discrepancy of about 4 per cent appeared.<sup>21</sup> Although the votes cast excluded the Mail-in, Hospital, Advance and Special Poll votes, as well as spoiled ballots, such votes also accounted for only about 3 to 4 per cent of the totals. Thus, the method appears to be valid. As one study puts it, 'it seems coarse to relate population figures, by ethnic background and birthplace, to voting,' but 'positive

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<sup>20</sup> R.A. Gabriel, The Ethnic Factor in the Urban Policy. New York: MSS Information Corporation, 1973, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> A similar methodology was also used in an historical study of ethnic voting in St. Boniface. See I. Turnbull, 'Local Autonomy and Municipal Reorganization: A Study of Ethnic Influences on the Local Politics of St. Boniface', M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, March, 1967, pp. 41-45.

\* In practice, the actual ceilings for Poll Groups 2,3,4 and 5 were 79.9%, 59.9%, 39.9% and 19.9%, respectively.

ecological correlations do exist and they are too valuable to ignore'.<sup>22</sup>

This method may suggest how groups tended to vote but does not in itself show why they voted as they did. That a particular ethnic group may vote as a bloc does not necessarily demonstrate that its behavior was directly due to ethnic considerations. One student of ethnic voting has noted that motivation cannot be determined from statistics alone:

The response cannot always be ascribed to ethnicity, which rarely affords a complete explanation. Nor is it possible in most cases to quantify the extent to which ethnicity is a causal factor of behaviour. It is easy to be mistaken and to consider ethnicity a cause for behaviour which should be properly ascribed elsewhere... [but] there is no question that under certain circumstances at certain times for certain groups there has been a relationship between the psycho-cultural inheritance of ethnic groups and their political behaviour.<sup>23</sup>

Another historian has advocated the use of election returns from small units:

If the historian would discover how any group actually voted, he must turn to an analysis of voting returns in terms of the smallest possible units. Only in a unit of size of a township can groups be isolated with enough precision for the historian to be sure that his conclusion is correct.<sup>24</sup>

Several other studies have also stressed 'the importance of analyzing returns from extremely small electoral units with heavy concentrations of a particular ethnic group.'<sup>25</sup> A study of St. Boniface local politics,

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<sup>22</sup>N. Wiseman, 'A Political History of the Manitoba CCF-NDP', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1975, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup>Fuchs, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>G.H. Daniels, 'Immigrant Vote in the 1860 Election: The Case of Iowa', in F.C. Luebke, ed., Ethnic Voters and the Election of Lincoln, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971, p. 125.

<sup>25</sup>Fuchs, op.cit., p. 33.



for example, compared the votes of large French and English areas:

An analytic distinction to be made between French and English... becomes apparent through a series of comparisons between the French and the English considered as voting groups. 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 behaviour become apparent.<sup>26</sup>

It would appear then that a study of ethnic voting based on poll returns, and supplemented by press reports and interviews where possible, may well be productive.

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<sup>26</sup>Turnbull, op. cit., p. 7.

## CHAPTER TWO. THE FRENCH VOTE IN MANITOBA : 1969-1973.

In 1966 Manitoba's government appeared to be securely held by the Conservative party. In the election of that year, it won a clear majority and neither opposition party seemed to constitute a major threat. But within three years, the political prospect changed markedly. In 1967 Premier Duff Roblin resigned to enter federal politics and was succeeded in the fall of that year by his former highways minister Walter Weir. In February of 1969 the Liberal leader, Gildas Molgat, also resigned after his party did poorly in four by-elections. He in turn was succeeded at a May leadership convention by Robert Bend, a school superintendent and former Liberal Progressive cabinet minister. Finally, in June of 1969, the New Democratic Party also changed leaders. Russell Paulley, the leader since 1961, resigned and was succeeded by Edward Schreyer, a former M.L.A. and M.P. for Springfield riding. These changes in leadership were followed by a dramatic upset in the provincial election on June 25, 1969. To virtually everyone's surprise, the NDP won the most votes and the most seats. Although its margin of victory was small, it was nonetheless the clear winner in the election; and on July 15 the new Schreyer government was sworn into office. Four years later it was returned to power with an increase in its popular vote and legislative seats.

In 1969, the French vote did not follow the provincial trend to the NDP. That party, in fact, generally ran a poor third in the heavy French polls. They remained loyal to the Liberal party, as they had for fifty years. The Conservatives ran second, but received less than half of the popular vote for the Liberals. The force of tradition in the

TABLE 2:1

## Manitoba Election Results: 1966-1973

	Cons.		Lib.		NDP		Others	
	Seats	% Vote	Seats	% Vote	Seats	% Vote	Seats	% Vote
1966	31	39.7	14	32.9	11	22.9	1	3.7
1969	22	35.5	5	23.9	28	38.1	2	2.1
1973	21	36.5	5	18.9	31	42.1	-	2.0

French districts appeared to be undiminished.

But in 1973 this pattern changed. The Liberal vote in the large French districts dropped by about 17 per cent, to second place; while the Conservatives fell to a poor third. From the admittedly crude aggregate figures, it appeared that the NDP was winning a large number of French voters away from both the Liberals and the Conservatives. This transfer appeared to be more marked in areas of high French concentration and had the effect of practically reversing the parties' relative positions from what they had been in 1969.

In terms of rural and urban support generally, between 1969 and 1973, the Conservatives gained slightly in Winnipeg, at the expense of both of the other parties, while the NDP gained about 9 per cent in the rural areas, which corresponded to the Liberal decline. Some of this rural NDP gain evidently occurred in the French districts, where its popular vote rose from less than a fifth to almost half. The major part of this gain was apparently from the Liberals. In the urban areas, in contrast, the Liberal vote held up somewhat better, and the NDP gain was correspondingly reduced. In neither rural nor urban areas was the

TABLE 2:2

## The French Vote in Manitoba: 1969-1973

Year	Poll Group	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% French Votes		% Party Vote			
				Voters	Cast	Cons	Lib	NDP	Others
1969	1	14	4,222	85.5	2,565	24.6	55.4	17.9	2.1
	2	24	8,166	69.2	4,826	16.7	51.8	29.8	1.5
	3	18	5,776	50.6	3,380	20.2	42.8	36.4	0.5
	4	35	9,618	29.5	5,717	29.3	35.4	35.0	0.4
	5	<u>124</u>	<u>33,867</u>	<u>7.7</u>	<u>22,244</u>	<u>40.5</u>	<u>29.6</u>	<u>28.2</u>	<u>1.7</u>
		215	61,649	28.6	38,732	33.1	36.3	29.5	1.4
1973	1	15	5,349	84.7	4,107	14.0	38.1	47.3	0.7
	2	22	8,189	68.6	6,073	9.7	43.6	46.1	0.6
	3	22	7,701	49.9	5,959	11.2	41.6	46.9	0.4
	4	34	9,769	28.1	7,334	25.3	31.8	42.5	0.5
	5	<u>141</u>	<u>42,289</u>	<u>7.4</u>	<u>33,069</u>	<u>37.7</u>	<u>28.2</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>0.8</u>
		234	73,297	27.1	56,542	28.6	32.4	38.3	0.7

TABLE 2:3

## The 1969 and 1973 Manitoba Elections: Urban and Rural

Year	Metro Winnipeg				Rural Manitoba			
	Cons	Lib	NDP	Other	Cons	Lib	NDP	Other
1969	31.9	21.9	45.3	0.9	39.5	26.3	30.7	3.5
1973	34.0	20.5	44.3	1.2	40.2	17.2	39.8	2.8

TABLE 2:4

The French Vote in Rural Manitoba: 1969-1973\*

Year	Poll Group	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% French Votes		% Party Vote			
				Voters	Cast	Cons.	Lib.	NDP.	Others
1969	1	12	3,328	86.1	1,969	30.2	48.7	18.4	2.7
	2	15	3,836	66.1	2,103	20.0	47.7	29.0	3.3
	3	8	1,180	48.3	695	33.2	30.8	33.4	2.3
	4	14	1,639	34.5	817	28.5	49.1	20.1	2.6
	5	<u>92</u>	<u>20,623</u>	<u>5.6</u>	<u>12,769</u>	<u>36.0</u>	<u>33.8</u>	<u>27.3</u>	<u>3.0</u>
		141	30,606	25.2	18,353	33.1	37.5	26.4	3.0
1973	1	11	3,645	84.9	2,776	20.6	29.5	48.9	1.0
	2	14	3,685	65.8	2,703	19.5	34.0	45.1	1.4
	3	9	1,518	54.5	1,229	29.5	26.8	41.8	2.0
	4	15	3,249	19.8	1,535	36.2	25.0	36.5	2.3
	5	<u>94</u>	<u>23,968</u>	<u>5.2</u>	<u>17,934</u>	<u>41.4</u>	<u>22.3</u>	<u>34.8</u>	<u>1.5</u>
		143	36,065	22.9	26,177	36.1	24.6	37.8	1.5

\* Rural ridings: Emerson, Springfield, La Verendrye, and Ste. Rose

Conservative party much of a contender, as its French vote declined to a fifth in the rural areas, and appeared virtually extinct in the urban areas. The new NDP vote was strong in both areas, although somewhat stronger in the rural ridings.

From very limited data drawn from homes for senior citizens, it

TABLE 2.5

The French Vote in Urban Manitoba: 1969-1973\*

Year	Poll Group	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% French Votes		% Party Votes			
				Voters	Cast	Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Others
1969	1	2	894	83.3	596	6.2	77.3	16.4	-
	2	9	4,330	72.0	2,723	14.5	55.0	30.4	-
	3	10	4,596	51.1	2,685	16.9	45.8	37.2	-
	4	21	7,979	28.5	4,900	29.4	33.1	37.5	-
	5	<u>32</u>	<u>13,244</u>	<u>10.9</u>	<u>9,475</u>	<u>46.6</u>	<u>23.9</u>	<u>29.5</u>	<u>-</u>
		74	31,043	32.0	20,379	33.1	34.7	32.2	-
1973	1	4	1,704	84.3	1,331	-	56.0	44.0	-
	2	8	4,504	70.8	3,370	1.9	51.2	46.9	-
	3	13	6,183	48.7	4,730	6.5	45.5	48.0	-
	4	19	6,520	32.2	5,799	22.4	33.6	44.0	-
	5	<u>47</u>	<u>18,321</u>	<u>10.4</u>	<u>15,135</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>35.2</u>	<u>31.6</u>	<u>-</u>
		91	37,232	31.3	30,365	22.1	39.2	38.8	-

\*Urban ridings: St. Boniface, St. Vital, and Ft. Garry.

appears that the French switch from the Liberals to the NDP also included elderly voters. In 1969 the Liberals won a large majority of this elderly vote. But in 1973 the NDP had better than a threefold increase which became a majority in a by-election held in St. Boniface

in 1974. In contrast, the NDP gain among the non-French elderly was not as pronounced: In two completely retired Ft. Garry polls that were 95 per cent non-French, the NDP vote rose from 23 per cent in 1969 to 32 per cent in 1973. The NDP vote in 1973 was higher among

TABLE 2.6

The Elderly Vote in Predominantly French Polls: 1969-1974

Year	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% Retired Voters	% French Voters	Vote Cast	% Party Vote		
						Cons.	Lib.	NDP
1969	3	700	71.9	46.3	268	25.3	61.9	12.7
1973	5	929	84.8	37.5	408	15.7	43.1	41.2
1974	5	1,496	66.0	64.4	1,038	4.1	41.2	54.2

the French elderly than among other elderly voters: In two completely retired La Verendrye polls that were 90 per cent French and 99 per cent non-French, the NDP vote in 1973 was 68 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively. This French transfer to the NDP among elderly voters is at variance with the reasonable assumption that cultural traditions and electoral allegiances should likely persist to a greater degree among the elderly.

The NDP support among French voters was also reflected in the number of French NDP candidates and M.L.A.'s. Before 1969 the French had never been represented in the CCF-NDP side of the Manitoba

legislature.<sup>1</sup> This pattern ended, however, in 1969 with the election in Springfield riding of René Toupin, a French Catholic credit union manager from the town of La Salle. On July 15 he entered the new NDP cabinet as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. After the 1969 election, Larry Desjardins, the Liberal member from St. Boniface,

TABLE 2.7

French Candidates and MLA's in Manitoba: 1966-1974

Year	French Candidates				French MLA's			
	Total	Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Total	Cons.	Lib.	NDP
1966	13	5	6	2	4	1	3	-
1969	15	4	9	2	5	1	2	2
1973	11	2	4	5	3	-	1	2
1974					3	-	-	3

sat in the NDP caucus as a Liberal-Democrat supporting the Schreyer government. He formally joined the party in May 1971 and in December of that year was appointed to the cabinet as the Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. In the April, 1971 by-election, Aimé Adam, a French farmer and fish dealer from Ste. Rose du Lac, west of Lake Manitoba, won the traditionally Liberal riding of Ste. Rose for

<sup>1</sup>J. McAllister, 'Ethnic Participation in Canadian Legislatures: The Case of Manitoba', in Canadian Ethnic Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, June, 1971, p. 112



the NDP. In 1973 both Toupin and Adam were re-elected, and Desjardins returned to the legislature following a 1974 by-election in St. Boniface. Thus, all three French MLA's were in the NDP, with two of them holding cabinet positions. More generally, there was a clear shift among all French candidates from the Liberals to the NDP.

This changing pattern both reflected, and probably influenced the general French vote transfer. From particular riding contests, it appeared that candidate ethnicity was of continuing importance. French voters clearly preferred a French candidate, regardless of his party affiliation: 'Règle générale, les francophones appuient un candidat francophone dans leur comté, et souvent sans tenir compte de son affiliation politique'.<sup>2</sup> This was shown by the results in 1969 in Ste. Rose and Emerson, and in 1973 in Springfield and La Verendrye. Where candidate ethnicity was not a factor, the general transfer from the Liberals to the NDP held: 'Ce qui a changé depuis l'avènement de Schreyer, c'est que les francophones sont prêts à appuyer un néo-démocrate non-francophone de préférence à un libéral'.<sup>3</sup> But given a choice between French and non-French candidates, the French districts generally preferred the former. From another perspective, the NDP gains were evidently enhanced in areas where the party's candidate was French.

Local factors also influenced the elections in each riding. Fort Garry and St. Vital, for instance, are suburban ridings that were

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<sup>2</sup> R. Painchaud, 'Les francophones face au gouvernement Schreyer, les écoles confessionnelles, et la défaite Desjardins', La Liberté et le Patriote (Henceforth abbreviated as LL), 18 juillet, 1973, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 20

TABLE 2.8

The French Vote in Fort Garry: 1969-1973

Year	Poll Group*	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% French Votes		% Party Vote		
				Voters	Cast	Cons.	Lib.	NDP
1969	1	3	1,031	56.7	743	30.7	33.3	36.1
	2	4	970	24.7	644	41.8	21.9	36.3
	3	<u>19</u>	<u>7,905</u>	<u>8.3</u>	<u>5,917</u>	<u>49.6</u>	<u>24.5</u>	<u>25.9</u>
		26	9,906	15.0	7,304	47.0	25.2	27.9
1973	1	3	995	55.8	793	27.2	42.5	30.2
	2	6	1,494	27.8	1,159	33.0	25.3	41.7
	<u>3</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>12,676</u>	<u>7.7</u>	<u>10,514</u>	<u>37.6</u>	<u>32.8</u>	<u>29.6</u>
		42	15,165	14.4	12,466	36.5	32.8	30.8

\* Poll Group:                      % French Voters:

1                                      over 40

2                                      20-40

3                                      0-20

traditionally Conservative. Each contains a relatively small French population: the St. Norbert area in Fort Garry and the northern district of St. Vital. In the three Fort Garry polls that were more than half French, the Liberals increased their support in 1973 about nine per cent, at the expense of the other two parties. A similar shift was in

evidence among the large non-French polls. In the three St. Vital polls that were almost half French, the popular vote distribution changed little, with the NDP each time winning a plurality over the Liberals. These two ridings proved somewhat anomalous in that the French shift to the NDP did not apparently occur. This was perhaps due to their Conservative traditions and the strong local Liberal campaigns in 1973. In any event, the sample is too small to warrant speculation.

La Verendrye and Ste. Rose are two rural ridings that were traditionally Liberal. Each contains a relatively cohesive and homogeneous French population. La Verendrye, located to the southeast of Winnipeg, includes the largely French towns of Ste. Anne, Richer, La Broquerie and Marchand. The Ste. Rose riding on the western side of Lake Manitoba contains the predominantly French towns of Ste. Rose du Lac, Laurier, Cayer and Toutes Aides. A French shift from the Liberals to the NDP was apparent in both ridings.

La Verendrye had a long history of electing Liberal candidates who were French: Sauveur Marcoux, Edmond Brodeur and Albert Vielfaure. In 1969 the Liberal vote was very evenly distributed, with little difference between the French and the other areas. In 1973, it dropped sharply throughout the riding, but especially in the French districts where the NDP almost doubled its vote. In effect, the positions of the two parties in these districts were completely reversed. In the non-French areas, however, there was a large transfer from the Liberals to the Conservatives. Thus, the Liberal vote in La Verendrye split apart: the French voters switched to the NDP; while other, mainly Mennonite, voters switched to the Conservative party. This French shift may have been, in part at least, a

TABLE 2.9

The French Vote in St. Vital: 1969-1973

Year	Poll Group*	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% French Voters	Votes Cast	% Party Vote			
						Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Other
1969	1	3	1,194	48.4	746	16.2	39.8	44.0	
	2	11	4,101	25.2	2,705	30.2	31.8	34.0	
	3	<u>13</u>	<u>5,339</u>	<u>14.7</u>	<u>3,558</u>	<u>41.7</u>	<u>22.8</u>	<u>35.4</u>	
		27	10,634	22.5	7,009	36.0	28.1	35.9	
1971	1	3	1,234	46.5	961	16.2	41.8	41.6	.3
	2	11	4,496	27.5	3,618	28.0	35.1	36.8	.1
	3	<u>14</u>	<u>5,863</u>	<u>11.8</u>	<u>4,709</u>	<u>37.5</u>	<u>28.8</u>	<u>33.6</u>	<u>.1</u>
		28	11,593	21.6	9,288	31.6	32.6	35.7	.1
1973	1	3	1,189	47.9	993	15.4	38.9	45.7	
	2	11	5,153	26.8	3,936	23.3	35.3	41.4	
	3	<u>14</u>	<u>5,645</u>	<u>12.0</u>	<u>4,621</u>	<u>23.5</u>	<u>40.5</u>	<u>36.1</u>	
		28	10,987	21.9	9,550	22.6	38.2	39.3	

\*Poll Group: % French Voters:

1	above 40
2	20-40
3	0-20

TABLE 2.10

The French Vote in La Verendrye: 1969-1973

Year	Poll Group	No.of Polls	Total Voters	% French Voters	Votes Cast	% Party Vote		
						Cons.	Lib.	NDP
1969	1	6	1,428	84.6	819	20.6	52.9	26.5
	2	<u>21</u>	<u>5,619</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>2,687</u>	<u>30.6</u>	<u>52.2</u>	<u>17.2</u>
		27	7,047	19.7	3,506	28.3	52.4	19.4
1973	1	5	1,747	82.6	1,353	21.1	28.8	50.2
	2	<u>22</u>	<u>7,044</u>	<u>2.8</u>	<u>5,024</u>	<u>49.0</u>	<u>36.0</u>	<u>15.0</u>
		27	8,791	18.7	6,377	43.1	34.5	22.5

response to candidate ethnicity. In 1969 the Liberal candidate, Leonard Barkman, a Mennonite businessman from Steinbach, won against two non-French candidates: John Blatz of the Conservatives and Elmer Reimer of the NDP. In 1973, however, the NDP ran Roger Smith, the Franco-Manitoban mayor of Ste. Anne, against Barkman, the Liberal incumbent, and the Conservatives' Robert Banman, a Mennonite auto dealer from Steinbach. The large French transfer from the Liberals was evidently encouraged to a degree by the presence of a French NDP candidate.

A similar pattern occurred in Ste. Rose. A traditionally Liberal stronghold, it was the safest Liberal seat in 1969. Gildas Molgat, the Liberal leader, won his sixth election there, this time with about half of the total vote and almost three-quarters of the French vote. His non-French opponents, Heinz Marohn of the Conservatives, Leon Hoefer of the

TABLE 2.11

The French Vote in Ste. Rose: 1969-1973 <sup>4</sup>

Year	Poll Group <sup>*</sup>	No. of Polls	% French Voters	Votes Cast	% Party Votes			
					Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Other
1969	1	5	67.6	1,016	13.7	70.5	8.9	7.0
	2	6	32.1	397	30.2	54.5	10.6	4.8
	3	<u>18</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>3,013</u>	<u>30.6</u>	<u>41.6</u>	<u>20.2</u>	<u>7.3</u>
		29	27.3	4,426	26.7	49.4	16.9	7.0
1971	1	5	67.6	1,599	20.3	41.1	38.7	-
	2	6	32.1	600	21.0	36.0	43.0	-
	3	<u>17</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>4,274</u>	<u>30.0</u>	<u>27.3</u>	<u>42.7</u>	-
		28	27.3	6,473	26.8	31.5	41.7	-
1973	1	5	67.6	1,430	10.0	46.1	43.9	-
	2	6	32.1	514	20.0	28.6	51.4	-
	3	<u>16</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>3,811</u>	<u>32.8</u>	<u>23.7</u>	<u>43.5</u>	-
		27	27.3	5,755	26.0	29.7	44.3	-

\*Poll Group: % French Voters

1 over 40

2 20-40

3 0-20

<sup>4</sup>All data on French polls are taken from the 1973 voters' list because the earlier lists were completely unavailable.

NDP and Norma Oswald of the Social Credit Party, trailed far behind with little French support. However, when he was subsequently appointed to the Senate, Molgat resigned his seat. In the April, 1971 by-election the NDP ran Aimé Adam, a local farmer of French origin, against the Liberal candidate, Fred Werbiski, a Rorketon rancher, and the Conservative candidate, John Boerchers, a Laurier farmer. Adam was elected by gaining Liberal votes from French and other groups. In the French polls, however, he scored his most dramatic gain as his vote there almost equalled that of the Liberals. In 1973 he retained his seat against the Liberals' Dwight Hopfner, a Ste. Rose farmer, and the Conservatives' Alfred O'Loughlin, a Glenella hotel owner. Once again, his French vote almost equalled that of the Liberals. The French shift from the Liberals in Ste. Rose may have been encouraged to a degree by the presence of a French NDP candidate.

Similar local factors entered into the Springfield and Emerson contests. The Springfield riding lies directly north of La Verendrye and includes such French towns as Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe and Lorette. Further south along the American border, Emerson contains the largely French communities of St. Malo and St. Pierre.

The 1973 election in Springfield saw a drastic loss in the Liberal vote in the heavy French districts to the other two parties, with the NDP winning a majority here. This French shift from the Liberals to the NDP was perhaps due in part to the presence of René Toupin, aided by his status as a cabinet minister, as the only French candidate in 1973; whereas in 1969 the Liberal candidate, Hector Bahuaud, had also been French.

TABLE 2.12

## The French Vote in Springfield: 1969-1973

Year	Poll Group*	No. of Polls	Total Voters	% French Voters	Votes Cast	% Party Vote			
						Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Other
1969	1	2	590	82.0	414	17.4	44.7	37.9	--
	2	6	1,398	64.1	784	18.0	19.6	62.4	--
	3	4	601	41.1	271	35.1	23.6	41.3	--
	4	<u>26</u>	<u>5,500</u>	<u>7.8</u>	<u>3,575</u>	<u>34.3</u>	<u>11.2</u>	<u>54.4</u>	--
		38	8,089	25.4	5,044	30.5	15.9	53.6	
1973	1	2	436	83.5	361	31.3	11.9	50.7	6.1
	2	5	1,724	62.1	1,408	29.8	20.3	47.0	2.9
	3	6	1,158	34.8	843	49.7	14.1	32.0	4.2
	4	<u>25</u>	<u>6,374</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>5,126</u>	<u>43.7</u>	<u>4.3</u>	<u>47.5</u>	<u>4.5</u>
		38	9,692	23.9	7,738	41.3	8.7	45.9	4.2

\*Poll Group: % French Voters:

1	75-100
2	50-75
3	25-50
4	0-25

John Vaags, the Conservative candidate in 1973, was a non-French Dugald farmer. In addition, the Liberal party split in 1973, as Harry Meronek, an East St. Paul engineer and the party's local association president, ran as an independent against the official Liberal candidate, Len Mendes, a



TABLE 2.13

The French Vote in Emerson: 1969-1973<sup>5</sup>

Year	Poll Group*	No. of Polls	% French Voters	Votes Cast	Cons.	% Party Vote		
						Lib.	NDP.	Other
1969	1	4	87.6	769	49.0	37.8	9.4	3.7
	2	8	60.9	774	37.5	43.0	14.2	5.3
	3	<u>36</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>3,766</u>	<u>46.4</u>	<u>35.8</u>	<u>13.5</u>	<u>4.3</u>
		48	27.1	5,309	45.5	37.2	13.0	4.4
1973	1	4	87.6	1,000	17.0	31.5	50.3	12.0
	2	8	60.9	808	24.6	34.0	40.1	1.2
	3	<u>36</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>4,205</u>	<u>36.5</u>	<u>27.3</u>	<u>35.0</u>	<u>1.4</u>
		48	27.1	6,013	31.6	28.7	38.3	1.2

\*Poll Group: % French Voters:

1 80-100

2 40-80

3 0-40

pipeline technician from Iles des Chênes.

Other local factors worked to the advantage of the NDP in Emerson.

There the Conservative French MLA, Gabe Girard, who had won in 1969, decided not to run for re-election, amid rumours that he was disillusioned

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See fn.4 on p. 23.

with the Conservative party and uncomfortable as a Franco-Manitoban within the caucus.<sup>6</sup> Although he denied the rumours, his withdrawal likely contributed to the sharp Conservative decline in the French polls. In 1973, the NDP's Steve Derewianchuk, a Manitoba Hydro employee, won the riding by almost tripling the party's previous vote. His opponents were the Conservatives' Garnet Kyle, a Dominion City farmer, and the Liberals' Mark Smerchanski, a former MP and MLA. The NDP gain was most dramatic among French voters who, confronted with non-French candidates, swung drastically from the Conservatives to the NDP. In the French polls the Conservative vote dropped from almost fifty per cent to less than a fifth; while the NDP vote here jumped from less than a tenth to over fifty per cent. The Conservative loss and the NDP gain in the large non-French polls were much less pronounced.

In at least four rural ridings where French voters were concentrated, therefore, it appears that local factors such as candidate ethnicity were influential in affecting voting allegiance. But the riding where they played perhaps the greatest role was St. Boniface. There, more than any other place, the French transfer from the Liberals to the NDP was most apparent. The political journey of Larry Desjardins, the St. Boniface MLA, since 1969 highlighted this change in ethnic allegiance.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Girard won't run', WT, June 9, 1973.

### CHAPTER THREE. THE 1969 ST. BONIFACE ELECTION

From its formation as a Roman Catholic mission in 1818 by Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin on the east bank of the Red River, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine, St. Boniface has remained the historical foundation and cultural centre of the French community in Manitoba. In 1969 the St. Boniface provincial constituency was bordered by the Red River on the north and west; Enfield Crescent, Dubuc and Cusson Streets on the south; and the CPR-Emerson branch line on the east. It was basically a working class residential area, sprinkled with small businesses and shops along Provencher and Marion Avenues and some industrial plants on Archibald Street. A French island in an English sea, the composition of the riding's over twenty thousand population in 1971 was still mostly French origin (55 per cent), largely French-speaking (51 per cent), and overwhelmingly Roman Catholic (75 per cent).<sup>1</sup> The greatest French concentration was in the district east of the St. Boniface Hospital on Taché Street and north of Provencher Avenue; while the English community was in greater force primarily south of Marion Street. Through the post-war period, like the other French districts already examined, it was faithfully Liberal; and in 1958 stayed Liberal when the province elected the Conservative government of Duff Roblin.

In 1959, it re-elected the Liberal candidate, this time a newcomer to the legislature, Larry Desjardins. According to one account, he was

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<sup>1</sup> The 1971 Census of Canada, Population and housing characteristics by census tracts-Winnipeg, Cat. 95-723 (CT-23A), March, 1973.

'a popular and prestigious French Canadian Liberal' who was already 'something of a folk hero even before he entered politics'.<sup>2</sup> The well-known manager of his two local funeral parlours, he had been a two-term city alderman. He was also active in various sports groups. He had been a one-time hockey player, president of the local hockey team, a public relations agent for a National Hockey team, and an executive of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

In the legislature, Desjardins consistently advocated public money for Catholic schools and French cultural organizations; the establishment of a French television station in St. Boniface; and the use of French as a language of instruction in public schools. His re-elections with large majorities in 1962 and 1966 were reportedly due to his reputation as 'an outspoken supporter of the French fact in Manitoba'.<sup>3</sup>

...the most astonishing of all (the Liberal MLA's) has to be Larry Desjardins in St. Boniface. No matter how badly the Liberals fail elsewhere in Metro, Desjardins not only wins but wins big.<sup>4</sup>

During this period, the Conservative vote in St. Boniface declined while the CCF-NDP vote remained below a fifth. In 1969 St. Boniface was justifiably considered to be 'one of the safest seats in the province' as Desjardins appeared to be a 'shoo-in'.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Turenne, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>3</sup>'Desjardins looks like shoo-in', Winnipeg Tribune (Henceforth abbreviated as WT), June 21, 1969.

<sup>4</sup>J. Martin, 'The Roblin Years Are Over--What Happens Now?', Winnipeg Free Press (Henceforth abbreviated as WFP), June 14, 1969, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>'Desjardins looks like shoo-in', WT, June 21, 1969.

TABLE 3.1

## St. Boniface Elections: 1953-1974

Year	% Party Vote			
	Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Other
1953	13.8	59.8	19.5	6.9
1958	37.1	45.1	17.8	-
1959	37.1	46.7	16.2	-
1962	28.9	61.6	9.8	-
1966	25.7	59.2	15.1	-
1969	13.1	54.1	32.8	-
1973	-	50.0	50.0	-
1974	5.3	43.0	51.6	-

Neither of his opponents in 1969 posed much of a challenge. The Conservative candidate was Maurice Arpin, a constitutional lawyer and special advisor to Premier Roblin. Originally, according to Arpin, the local Tory association held the attitude that 'St. Boniface doesn't want us; so to hell with them'. It considered not even bothering to field a candidate in 1969. In a personal telephone call, however, Premier Weir asked Arpin to find someone to run. Arpin soon discovered that 'no one wanted to touch it with a twenty foot pole - no one respectable, that is'. He reluctantly agreed to be the candidate himself, and was duly nominated unopposed at a Conservative meeting 'by an audience of about nine, including my wife and law partners'. By his account, he raised no campaign funds; did not open a campaign office; and conducted 'no cam-

paigning whatsoever', because 'it was impossible for a Conservative to be elected in St. Boniface'. He ran simply because 'no one else wanted to run'.<sup>6</sup> Nor did the NDP candidate in 1969 pose a serious challenge to the Liberals. Kam Gajdosik was a young trade unionist of Polish ancestry, making his first attempt to win public office. He waged an active door-to-door campaign but evidently had little appeal among the French voters.

At the provincial level, however, the campaign was influenced by party leadership. One issue which entered the campaign was the federal policy on bilingualism. The policy stemmed from the recommendations of a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.<sup>7</sup> In October of 1968, the Liberal government headed by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced a bill to implement some of these recommendations. Following extensive discussion in parliament through the following months, the Official Languages Act came into effect in July, 1969.<sup>8</sup> It offered an official status of equity to English and French in the federal civil service, courts and Crown agencies in certain 'bilingual districts' where the minority of either language group constituted ten per cent of the population. It also created a federal languages commissioner, responsible to parliament, to investigate any infraction. Justice Minister John Turner described the aim of the act as to ensure 'equality

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<sup>6</sup>Personal Interview with Maurice Arpin, February 19, 1976.

<sup>7</sup>Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Book 1: The Official Languages, October 8, 1967.

<sup>8</sup>Revised Statutes of Canada, 19 Elizabeth II, Chapter 54.

of access to the federal institutions of government, [so] that every citizen should be able to communicate with the federal government in either of the two official languages'.<sup>9</sup> Opposition to this legislation from non-French groups, especially in the West, was in evidence.

The new Liberal leader in Manitoba apparently felt sympathy to such opposition. The February resignation of Gildas Molgat as the Liberal leader and the subsequent victory of Robert Bend at a party convention on May 10 appeared to endanger the party's French allegiance. Bend's ambiguous attitude towards the new federal legislation on bilingualism and his lack of sensitivity to or interest in French concerns reportedly made some French Liberals uneasy. To allay any such doubt, he attempted on June 5 to minimize his differences with Desjardins on bilingualism: 'I understand Mr. Desjardins' views on this matter. I do not anticipate any difficulty whatsoever and I'm very glad to welcome him aboard'.<sup>10</sup> For his part, Desjardins declared that he was 'not a rubber stamp' and would quit the local Liberal party if it did not support the federal policy.<sup>11</sup> He later recalled that he was 'quite concerned' at the time because Bend 'had either no interest in or was against the French'.<sup>12</sup> Sharing this assessment, another political participant later commented that 'Bend, especially on the French question,

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<sup>9</sup>Quoted in J. Saywell, ed., Canadian Annual Review, (Henceforth abbreviated as CAR), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>'Bilingualism Stand Accepted', WFP, June 5, 1969.

<sup>11</sup>'M. Desjardins affirme ses convictions personnelles en matière de bilinguisme et d'unité nationale', LL, 4 juin, 1969.

<sup>12</sup>Personal Interview with Larry Desjardins, February 27, 1976.

was either negative or at best indifferent'.<sup>13</sup>

If Bend seemed 'indifferent' to the French, the Conservative Premier, Walter Weir, seemed downright hostile. An Anglo-Saxon undertaker from the small town of Minnedosa, Weir's political style was blunt. At a federal-provincial constitutional conference in Ottawa in February of 1969, he declared that fiscal matters deserved a higher priority than linguistic and constitutional issues, and added that he intended to challenge the constitutionality of the Official Languages Act. A government pamphlet concluded that

drastic extension of language privileges by legislation must fail in its objectives and divide rather than unify the nation. More effective is the extension of those privileges by the process of gradualism.<sup>14</sup>

During the campaign Weir repeated this stand, possibly hoping to exploit a potential anti-French backlash.

Among the French voters, this 'evident hard line on French Canada' could scarcely be popular; and Maurice Gauthier, president of La Société Franco-Manitobaine, described it as 'extremely repulsive'.<sup>15</sup> Desjardins, who reportedly 'had no use for Weir',<sup>16</sup> strongly condemned his attitude and position, calling the premier 'an opportunist' using 'divide-to-conquer tactics', and 'instilling fear in the hearts of many Manitobans' in order 'to reap the benefits of prejudice'.<sup>17</sup> This French dissatisfac-

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<sup>13</sup>Personal Interview with Jean Hébert, executive assistant to Desjardins, January 15, 1976.

<sup>14</sup>Government of Manitoba, What Tomorrow, Canada?, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup>CAR, 1969, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup>Hébert Interview.

<sup>17</sup>'Bilingualism Stand Accepted', WFP, June 5, 1969.



tion with Weir was also felt by Paul Marion, a prominent French Conservative and deputy mayor of Winnipeg who later joined the Liberals. He later commented:

He put me off, particularly with the French question. I came to think: Screw it. I'm not belonging to this party with this man as leader. There was no room for French Manitobans in that party.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast with Bend and Weir, the new NDP leader, Edward Schreyer, was a Roman Catholic fluent in French. From the beginning of his political career in 1958 when he was first elected to the Legislature as a CCF member from Brokenhead, he had supported French cultural interests. In March of 1959, for example, he delivered a speech in the legislature partly in French, which at that time was a rarity.<sup>19</sup> In May of 1965, he supported Desjardins' resolution to extend the use of French as a language of instruction in the public schools, claiming that the matter 'involves the broadest question of national unity, national goals and the restoration of rights under the Constitution'.<sup>20</sup> Again, in October of 1968, as MP for Springfield, he described the proposed Official Languages Act as 'praiseworthy' and found it 'easy to support in spirit, intent and in purpose'.<sup>21</sup> Commenting upon his succession to the NDP leadership in June of 1969, a French editorial described him as:

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<sup>18</sup>Personal Interview with Paul Marion, January 15, 1976. Sidney Spivak, Weir's successor as Tory leader, later judged Weir to be 'just more economic (in his interest) and not anti-French' and claimed that this was unfairly 'exploited by his opponents'. Interview with Sidney Spivak, February 17, 1976.

<sup>19</sup>Manitoba, Legislative Assembly Debates (Henceforth abbreviated as Debates), March 25, 1959, pp. 311-314.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., May 11, 1965, p. 2647.

<sup>21</sup>Canada, House of Commons Debates, October 17, 1968, pp. 1498-1500.

un homme de grand talent...qui jouit déjà d'une bonne cote de popularité auprès de certains Franco-Manitobains. Il n' a jamais hésité à affirmer ses convictions en matière de bilinguisme.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, during the 1969 provincial campaign, despite warnings that the issue 'could harm him',<sup>23</sup> he stated that 'the main parts of the (Official Languages) bill are acceptable'; claimed that its opponents 'don't understand Canadian history or what is involved'; and condemned Weir's intention to challenge its constitutionality as 'sterile, time-consuming and money-wasting':

I fail to see how he has ever contributed to national unity...If Mr. Weir persists in his stand on the constitution and the language bill, he will impair the unity of the nation and I want to take him head on on it.<sup>24</sup>

On June 10 in Lorette, a predominantly French town in the Springfield riding, Schreyer restated his position:

A New Democrat government in Manitoba would support most of the principles of the Official Languages Act because we believe it is right for our country--even though it may cost the party a few votes in some areas. We may lose this election, if the people of Manitoba are narrowminded and prejudiced against their fellow man. Premier Weir's stand on language and constitutional matters cannot help but endanger the future of Canadian nationhood--if we are to survive as a nation, we cannot afford narrow or petty attitudes about the rights of French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec.<sup>25</sup>

On the eve of the 1969 election, if a disinterested student of ethnic political behaviour had considered these remarks, in contrast with the equivocal or seemingly hostile positions taken by the other party leaders, he could have reasonably expected that they might win some additional

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<sup>22</sup>'La campagne électorale', LL, 11 juin 1969, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup>Personal Interview with René Toupin, February 18, 1976.

<sup>24</sup>'NDP chief backs revised languages bill', WT, June 9, 1969; 'Tories Attacked, Liberals Ignored', WFT, June 10, 1969.

<sup>25</sup>'Schreyer crusades for head-on confrontation with Weir', WFP, June 10, 1969.

French votes for the NDP.

That this did not occur to any large extent has already been demonstrated. Evidently regardless of Schreyer's position, the French vote stayed with the Liberal party. In St. Boniface, Desjardins was again re-elected, this time with about 54 per cent of the popular vote. In the polls of high French concentration, he won two thirds of the vote and every poll. The NDP ran a distant second, with only a quarter of the French vote. This was better than in 1966, when the party won only about ten per cent in the French district, but not much better. The NDP gains in 1969 occurred mainly in the more prosperous neighborhoods; while the traditional Liberal votes stayed firm in the poorer areas.

TABLE 3.2

The 1966 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote

Area	No. of Polls	Votes Cast	% Party Vote			% Polls Won Lib.
			Cons.	Lib.	NDP	
Largest 7 French Polls*	7	2,292	19.3	70.8	10.0	100.0
St. Boniface	21	6,789	25.7	59.2	15.1	100.0

\*Because the 1966 voters' list was unavailable, the polls in the northwest area that was about 80 per cent French were used.

TABLE 3.3

The 1969 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote

Poll Group*	No. of Polls	% French Voters		Votes Cast	% Party Vote			% Polls Lib.	Won NDP
		No.	%		Cons.	Lib.	NDP		
1	5	2,108	79.3	1,663	9.0	66.2	24.8	100.0	0.0
2	8	2,451	65.9	2,162	13.1	58.1	28.8	100.0	0.0
3	<u>8</u>	<u>1,494</u>	<u>37.1</u>	<u>2,241</u>	<u>16.2</u>	<u>40.5</u>	<u>43.3</u>	<u>50.0</u>	<u>50.0</u>
	21	6,053	57.6	6,066	13.1	53.8	33.1	81.0	19.0

\* Poll Groups: % French Voters

1 75-100

2 50-75

3 25-50

TABLE 3.4

The 1969 St. Boniface Election: Income

Census Tract	Av. Male Income (\$)	French Voters	Votes Cast	Cons.	% Party Vote	
					Lib.	NDP
116	4,892	62.2	2,436	14.4	59.6	26.0
117	5,111	72.6	1,635	8.0	62.9	29.0
113	5,284	36.3	1,069	15.2	34.1	50.7
114	5,388	44.3	<u>926</u>	<u>16.2</u>	<u>45.4</u>	<u>38.4</u>
			6,066	13.1	53.8	33.1

Source: The 1971 Census of Canada, Population and housing characteristics by census tracts - Winnipeg, Cat. 95-723 (CT-23A), March, 1973.

Thus, even though it fared so badly across the province that Bend shortly resigned, the Liberal party retained St. Boniface. Meanwhile, with the installation of the new NDP government, there began a train of events which would transform the political allegiance of the French community.

#### CHAPTER FOUR. THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE ELECTIONS: 1969-1973

In the four years after its election to office in 1969, the NDP enacted several major policies favourable to the ethnic interests of the French community. Such policies included the establishment of French as a language of instruction in public schools; safeguards for the French identity within the new Unicity structure; the creation of a French-Manitoban cultural centre and a French teacher training institution in St. Boniface; an attempt by the premier to extend public aid to private and parochial schools; and a system of government grants to French cultural groups. During this time, Larry Desjardins played a prominent role in initiating and promoting these various policies.

The close results in 1969 produced a politically uncertain climate. With twenty-eight seats, the NDP was one short of an overall majority in the legislature. The allegiance of the member from St. Boniface became crucial in this situation. He was immediately courted by both the Conservatives and the NDP. Through Gildas Molgat, the Conservatives proposed a Conservative-Liberal coalition government, with a cabinet seat for Desjardins and immediate legislation to provide public aid to denominational schools.<sup>1</sup> For its survival, the NDP also solicited French support. Delegations including, at one time or another, Schreyer, his executive assistant Douglas Rowland, René Toupin, and Rheal Teffaine, a former Conservative,<sup>2</sup> met several times with Desjardins. One meeting at

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<sup>1</sup>Desjardins Interview.

<sup>2</sup>According to a close observer, the day after the election Schreyer met with Teffaine; explained his plans for the French; and won his support for a NDP government. Personal Interview with Professor Robert Painchaud, January 28, 1976.

his home lasted until three in the morning.

In retrospect, Desjardins claimed that he always opposed a Conservative-Liberal coalition, because he believed that the voters had decisively rejected the Weir administration. He could not support a party whose policy of 'gradualism' concerning French language rights was in direct opposition to the Official Languages Act. He judged the Conservatives to be 'a party of gutless wonders' that, failing to obtain his support through offers of a cabinet post and favourable French legislation, threatened him with political revenge: 'I was an opportunist, I had the opportunity of pushing these guys out of office and, boy, I sure latched on to that, I'll tell you'.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Desjardins believed that the NDP, in his words, deserved 'a kick at the cat' in forming a government. He initially told the NDP delegations, however, that he would not even consider a cabinet post in exchange for his support and that he would not become an NDP party member because 'I'm no socialist'. He did obtain a clear statement of Schreyer's personal intentions concerning the French: 'I horse-traded. I wanted French instruction, parochial aid, etc.'<sup>4</sup> In Desjardins' later judgment, such commitments were voluntary, based on Schreyer's personal beliefs, and not coerced by the NDP's desire to ensure his support. Indeed, he would later repeatedly say that 'the views of the leader of the NDP on this subject (of the French) had much to do with my decision to support him in office.'<sup>5</sup> René Toupin subsequently recalled that

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<sup>3</sup>Debates, September 5, 1969, p. 496 and March 24, 1970, p. 275.

<sup>4</sup>Desjardins Interview.

<sup>5</sup>Debates, August 25, 1969, p. 147.

Desjardins harboured 'no personal gain or glory' in such a decision, although his 'coming to the party was tinted to help the French-Manitoban society'.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, he agreed to attend the NDP caucus, but only when government rather than party business was being discussed, and to support the Schreyer government so long as his conscience permitted. A year later he summed up his basic choice:

En somme, il s'agissait pour moi de faire un choix entre deux hommes plutôt que deux partis: M. Weir, chef du parti conservateur qui ne s'était pas montré sympathique aux canadiens français, ni à l'idée d'un Canada bilingue; ou M. Schreyer, qui, lui, avait durant sa campagne électorale et en beaucoup d'autres circonstances, qui avait, dis-je, déclaré de façon non-équivoque son désir de voir un Canada bilingue qui permettrait à tous les canadiens de s'épanouir selon l'une ou l'autre des deux langues officielles du pays.<sup>7</sup>

He announced his choice at a special press conference on July 1. Perhaps appropriately on the anniversary of Confederation, he stressed 'national unity' as his justification:

Mr. Schreyer is ready--I would even say anxious to tackle bigotry and prejudice head on if it should arise and to try to eradicate it. I would like to help him achieve this worthwhile and courageous ambition. We have discussed this and Mr. Schreyer believes that I have a contribution to make -- not only to the cause of French and English Canadians--but to the Manitoba mosaic--to all Canadians....Call him a Social Democrat--call me a Liberal Democrat. I am confident there will be very little difference.<sup>8</sup>

The next day he added that his constituency association would meet on July 8 and if it did not clearly approve this switch, he would resign. The Manitoba Liberal Association and the St. Boniface Liberal Association officially disassociated themselves from this meeting. The executive of

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<sup>6</sup>Toupin Interview.

<sup>7</sup>Debates, June 26, 1970, p. 3369.

<sup>8</sup>'Desjardins gives NDP clear majority', WT, July 2, 1969.



La Société Franco-Manitobaine publicly stated, however, that it 'fully endorses Mr. Desjardins' move to sit with the New Democrats in the legislature' because Schreyer believed in 'promoting unity within Manitoba's mosaic and the French Canadian role therein.'<sup>9</sup> After an emotional address to the meeting, Desjardins reportedly received the 'overwhelming support' of the eight hundred persons in attendance.<sup>10</sup>

On August 18 Schreyer announced in the legislature the appointment of Desjardins as his legislative assistant for Dominion-Provincial Relations, with responsibilities for cultural affairs, 'a field which he has a good deal of interest in and accordingly it will be a labour of love'.<sup>11</sup> Desjardins accepted these duties as 'a challenge and something close to my heart.'<sup>12</sup> This initial support and involvement with the Schreyer government eventually resulted in Desjardins becoming a NDP party member in May of 1971; Minister of Cultural Affairs--'an ideal position for a French Manitoban'<sup>13</sup>--in December of that year; and the NDP candidate in the 1973 St. Boniface election. Through this period, the Schreyer government, aided by Desjardins, implemented several policies concerning the French community.

Speaking in French to an audience of some five hundred persons at the first congress of La Société Franco-Manitobaine on December 7, 1969, the premier outlined his intention to authorize the use of French

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<sup>9</sup> 'Desjardins On His Own, Says Party', WFP, July 8, 1969.

<sup>10</sup> 'Constituents Okay Desjardins Move', WFP, July 9, 1969.

<sup>11</sup> Debates, August 18, 1969, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., August 25, 1969, p. 147.

<sup>13</sup> 'Mind-Boggling Appointment', WFP, January 29, 1974.

as a language of instruction in public schools 'in areas where the majority is French-speaking'; to establish a French language teacher training institute in St. Boniface; and to promote the founding of a French cultural centre:

We recognize the importance of the French-speaking minority in Manitoba....In my opinion it is in Manitoba's interest that a bilingual character be assumed by this province.<sup>14</sup>

This speech reportedly produced 'a standing ovation' from the French audience as 'people literally cried'.<sup>15</sup> Etienne Gaboury, the Society's president, expressed the audience's gratitude and respect for the premier as 'a statesman who translates into acts the principles you have formulated throughout your career'.<sup>16</sup>

One of these commitments--to restore French as an instructional language in public schools--was shortly fulfilled. The issue had a lengthy history in Manitoba politics. It dated back to 1890, when the provincial government of Thomas Greenway abolished the use of French as a language of instruction in the province's public schools.<sup>17</sup> This in turn was reversed following the 'persuasion' and 'sunny ways' of Wilfred Laurier, the Liberal leader, who became Prime Minister in 1896. According to the Laurier-Greenway compromise of 1897, French could be used in public schools in French-speaking school districts within a bilingual system.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 'French in all grades soon', WT, December 8, 1969.

<sup>15</sup> Hébert Interview.

<sup>16</sup> 'French in all grades soon', WT, December 8, 1969.

<sup>17</sup> J.A. Jackson, The Centennial History of Manitoba, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1970, pp. 141-142.

<sup>18</sup> Manitoba Statutes, 60 Victoria, c.26; Jackson, p. 150; W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957, p.271.

In 1916, however, amendments to the School Act prohibited such bilingual teaching, making English the sole language of instruction at all levels in all public schools.<sup>19</sup> Apparently, this prohibition, 'as much honoured in the breach as it was in the observance', was never vigorously enforced in the French communities, but it nonetheless remained a continuing source of grievance.<sup>20</sup> French organizations, such as L'association d'éducation des Canadiens français du Manitoba and the French-Canadian School Trustees Association in Manitoba, continued requests to successive governments for redress. They were supported in 1959 by a provincial Royal Commission on Education, headed by Dr. R.O. Macfarlane, that urged the government to encourage the use of French as a language of instruction and a subject of study in all schools from the earliest grades.<sup>21</sup> Responding to this, the Conservative government of Duff Roblin in 1963 provided for a French 'option' programme which permitted up to one hour a day of French instruction for students of French origin.<sup>22</sup> Another advocate became the provincial Liberal party when, at its November 18, 1966 convention, it was prompted by Desjardins to endorse the full extension of such French usage. The next year the legislature permitted the use of French for up to half of each school day.<sup>23</sup>

The NDP government went much further in this direction. On March 12, 1970 the Throne Speech referred to the need for a 'greater recognition

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<sup>19</sup> Jackson, p. 192; Morton, pp. 351-353.

<sup>20</sup> Jackson, p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> Manitoba, Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education, November, 1959; Jackson, p. 252.

<sup>22</sup> Jackson, p. 253.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

of the varied linguistic and cultural composition of our province' and, to this end, stated that 'permissive legislation' concerning language rights and use would be enacted.<sup>24</sup> Premier Schreyer stressed his desire to maintain the French culture in Manitoba: 'Now we're going to move to try and...preserve the language, doing this by way of enabling the teaching of it from Grade 1, which is where it counts most'.<sup>25</sup> Saul Miller, the Education Minister, described the proposed measure as 'correct and necessary':

[It is] a simple and straightforward attempt to provide French-speaking Manitobans with their established right to be instructed in the official language of their choice within the framework of our public school system.<sup>26</sup>

Desjardins termed the bill 'one of the most important pieces of this legislature, indeed, of any session that I've ever attended', and defended it as an attempt 'to promote unity in our province, to correct past injustices and to help eradicate prejudice and misunderstanding in our society'. After noting that many had contributed to the new policy, he added that Schreyer's role had been decisive:

Certainly the lion's share of the credit should go to the present Premier who, while campaigning for the leadership of his party and later on during the election campaign, always spoke frankly and made it clear that he was backing the official languages bill. This bill would be a tribute to him in his keen interest in national unity and the building of the Manitoba mosaic.<sup>27</sup>

Later that day, the bill passed by a unanimous vote and received royal

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<sup>24</sup>Debates, March 12, 1970, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., March 23, 1970, p. 229.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., June 24, 1970, p. 3163.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1970, p. 3371.

assent on July 16.<sup>28</sup>

However, Desjardins did not receive such personal satisfaction that same summer during the Autopac controversy, when the NDP government proposed a public auto insurance system. His eventual support for this plan, following a great deal of indecision and anguish, helped to save the government from a legislative defeat and the province from an election. But by doing so, he became the victim of merciless insults and harassment. Such treatment moved him to announce to the legislature on August 13 his intention to resign shortly after the end of the session.<sup>29</sup> He later recalled this period as 'a most frustrating time' in his life, personally as well as politically.<sup>30</sup> But Schreyer 'talked me out of it (resigning)', convincing him that he was needed in the government. Indeed, on May 14, 1971, he announced in a press conference that he had decided to join the NDP, after the premier had personally asked him to become 'a full-fledged, card-carrying member of the NDP'.<sup>31</sup>

It was as a NDP party member that Desjardins supported Bill 36, the government bill to establish Unicity, an integration of the various local municipalities of metropolitan Winnipeg into one centralized city government. This amalgamation sought to centralize the coordination of city affairs as well as to stimulate local neighbourhood participation. The new council was to consist of fifty members directly elected from

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<sup>28</sup> Statutes of Manitoba, 19 Elizabeth II, c 66, 'An Act to Amend the Public Schools Act (2)'.

<sup>29</sup> Debates, August 13, 1970, p. 4599.

<sup>30</sup> Desjardins Interview.

<sup>31</sup> 'Desjardins shifts to 'where action is'', WT, May 15, 1971.

wards averaging about ten thousand in population. The election of the mayor, initially planned to be by and from the council, was later changed to be directly from all of the citizens. In addition, there were to be thirteen communities, each having a committee of private citizens to assist their councillors.<sup>32</sup>

On the surface, despite its emphasis on citizen participation, it appeared that the new Unicity government might endanger the local autonomy of St. Boniface and the ethnic identity of its French citizens. Just as Ottawa's centralist encroachments into areas of provincial autonomy have been opposed by the French Canadians of Quebec, the NDP's Unicity proposal could have possibly antagonized St. Boniface's French community and its sense of ethnic distinctiveness.

However, this possible conflict between the NDP centralist principle and the French desire to maintain local control did not occur. This was in part due to the traditional preoccupation of the French minority with national and provincial rather than municipal government, as well as the NDP's emphasis on maximizing local participation in the new city government.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Desjardins discounted any such possible conflict. He did not perceive any real threat to the French survival in St. Boniface from this bill: 'I very seriously cannot see how anything in this bill can endanger the culture, the history, and the language that I'm proud of'. Indeed, he described Part 111 of the bill, its special section on the official languages, as a major reform:

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<sup>32</sup> Statutes of Manitoba, 20 Elizabeth 11, c.105, 'The City of Greater Winnipeg Act'.

<sup>33</sup> Similarly, little French opposition from St. Boniface was in evidence when the Metro government was created in 1961. See Turnbull, op. cit.

It guarantees the right for the people of St. Boniface to be served in French if they so desire, and also for the people that will go to the main office of the new form of government. That is something that was never done before.<sup>34</sup>

Desjardins later claimed that he had been instrumental in securing these provisions safeguarding the French language.<sup>35</sup> The new Unicity, then, appeared to enhance rather than endanger the French presence in local government. In this way, a potential conflict between the NDP government and the French community was avoided.

It was also Desjardins, as Cultural Affairs Minister from December 1, 1971, who introduced on May 25 of the following year, Le Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain Act.<sup>36</sup> The centre was to promote 'the furtherance and preservation of the French culture in Manitoba'.<sup>37</sup> Facilities in the proposed centre were to include a theatre, cafeteria, gymnasium, exhibit hall and offices; while activities were to consist of courses, concerts, theatrical productions and art exhibits. The bill evidently enjoyed the full support of the NDP caucus and cabinet. Mines Minister Sidney Green, for example, stated that protection of the French culture offered other ethnic minorities the best guarantee against efforts to eliminate their cultural heritages; and Labour Minister Russell Paulley said that he was 'proud as a W.A.S.P. to give my support to the recognition of biculturalism'.<sup>38</sup> The bill was passed and given royal assent on July 11, 1972.

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<sup>34</sup> Debates, June 11, 1971, pp. 2495-2496. See Sections 79-81 of the Act.

<sup>35</sup> Desjardins Interview.

<sup>36</sup> Statutes of Manitoba, 21 Elizabeth II, c.43, 'Le Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain Act'.

<sup>37</sup> Debates, June 12, 1972, p. 2872.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., June 29, 1972, pp. 3601-3602; p.3624.

Another measure that did not pass the 1972 session, however, involved a matter of deep concern to the French Catholic community. The thorny question of separate schools for Roman Catholics and other religious minorities had plagued Manitoba politics for almost a century. This concern also dated from 1890, when public tax support was withdrawn from private and parochial schools.<sup>39</sup> Since that time, the restoration of such public aid had been repeatedly requested by both clerical and lay leaders in the French community. Although the Coldwell amendments in 1912 provided some partial relief for Catholic parents supporting private schools in Winnipeg, they were rescinded four years later, forcing these schools to pay their own way as they had since 1890.<sup>40</sup> By the late 1950's, as education costs mounted, forcing several Catholic schools to shut down, the requests for help became more urgent. They were supported in 1959 by the report of a provincial Royal Commission on Education, which recommended that the province provide full financial assistance if these schools followed the curriculum and maintained the standards of public schools.<sup>41</sup> Partial relief was offered in 1965, when a limited system of 'shared services' between public and private schools on such aspects as transportation and textbooks was established.<sup>42</sup> When Schreyer, a Catholic, who had always advocated public support, became premier, there was renewed hope of government help for Catholic schools.

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<sup>39</sup> Jackson, op. cit., pp. 141-142.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 191-192; Morton, op. cit., pp. 325-327.

<sup>41</sup> Manitoba, Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education, Ch. XI 'Private Schools', November, 1959, pp. 175-184.

<sup>42</sup> Jackson, p. 253.



On March 12, 1971, he indicated that legislation permitting some form of public aid would likely be forthcoming within the year and that he might resign if such aid was not realized. After open cabinet opposition, notably from Sidney Green, he withdrew his threat to resign but still maintained that aid was justified. On March 26, Desjardins, a long-time proponent of such aid, resigned his position as the premier's legislative assistant and declared that he would no longer attend the government caucus because Green's opposition was undermining the premier's leadership:

This government without a strong Premier Schreyer could be dangerous .... The people of Manitoba elected a Schreyer government, not a NDP government. If the name of the party was the Schreyer party, I'd have no trouble supporting it, but maybe he's not as strong as I'd like him to be.<sup>43</sup>

This withdrawal from the government was short-lived, however, for within a month Desjardins joined the NDP as a party member and resumed his legislative duties. Later that fall, the NDP convention, faced with strong opposition to a party vote, decided that there should be a free vote in the legislature on the issue. In February of 1972, Green left the cabinet to lead the anti-public aid forces. On June 30 of that year, the premier introduced a personal motion to establish a legislative committee to study this stormy question; but after a lengthy and heated debate, it was defeated on July 19 in a free vote by thirty to twenty-two, with twelve NDP members including four cabinet ministers joining most of the Conservatives, except Gabe Girard of Emerson, in voting against it.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Desjardins To Sit As Independent', WFP, March 27, 1971.

<sup>44</sup>'MLA's Defeat Schools Study', WFP, July 20, 1972.

With this result, Schreyer expressed his personal disappointment:

I feel I have done all I can.... but obviously my powers of persuasion were unequal to the task. He [Desjardins] is disappointed, as I am, but so it goes.<sup>45</sup>

However, the respect and gratitude of the French community for the premier greatly increased because of this attempt, even in the face of his own party's opposition, to redress one of their historical grievances.

Offsetting this defeat to a degree was the establishment in the fall of 1972 of l'Institut Pédagogique français du Manitoba at the Collège de St.-Boniface. Originating from the first mission school founded in St. Boniface in 1818, the St. Boniface College was incorporated in 1871 and affiliated with the University of Manitoba in 1877. To meet the need for bilingual teachers, a special training school had been founded in St. Boniface for French teachers in 1899 but soon closed down.<sup>46</sup> 'A long-sought dream in St. Boniface', however, remained the permanent establishment of a French teacher training institution.<sup>47</sup> Following several years of difficult negotiation with Ottawa, the NDP government agreed to finance such an institution jointly with the federal government. When it was officially opened in the fall of 1974, Schreyer noted in French that its completion marked 'une étape significative dans l'histoire de la communauté franco-manitobaine':

J'espère que nous pourrons continuer de travailler ensemble avec le même enthousiasme et que j'aurai pendant plusieurs années encore l'occasion de collaborer avec des individus qui jouissent de mon amitié sincère.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> 'Schreyer Won't Resign', WFP, July 21, 1972.

<sup>46</sup> Morton, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>47</sup> 'First in the West: College All French', WFP, October 25, 1974.

<sup>48</sup> 'Discours de M. Schreyer à l'ouverture de l'Institut Pédagogique', LL, 30 Octobre 1974, p. 1.

With its enrollment of ninety students and eleven faculty members, the institute hoped soon to handle over two hundred students a year. This was expected to provide the qualified French teachers needed to extend the use of French as an instructional language in the public schools.

In addition to these legislative changes, the NDP government also provided increased financial grants to assist various French culture groups and activities. To build Le Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, for instance, the government supplemented the \$500,000 grant from the Centennial Corporation by matching the federal contribution of \$650,000.<sup>49</sup> The centre could also draw up to \$200,000 a year as working capital from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, as well as borrow or raise temporary money up to \$100,000, backed by a government guarantee.<sup>50</sup> The provincial government also funded one third of the \$50,000 cost of restoring the burnt Cathedrale-Basilique de St.-Boniface. Other French organizations to receive provincial assistance included the Festival du Voyageur, St. Boniface's winter carnival, which received \$20,000 for the year ending in January, 1972; Le Cent Nons, a French song group, who were granted \$5,000 one year; Le Cercle Molière, a fifty-year old French theatrical group, who were granted \$11,000 one year; Les Gais Manitobains a French dance ensemble; Metro-Mani, a French choir group; and Chorale des Intrepides, a French dance group.<sup>51</sup> Such financial aid marked

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<sup>49</sup> Debates, May 1, 1973, p. 2255 and May 3, 1973, p. 2344.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., June 12, 1972, p. 2872.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., June 6, 1972, p. 2718.

a considerable increase since the coming to power of the NDP in 1969. René Chartier, the premier's executive assistant, later acknowledged that the French community clearly led other ethnic groups throughout these years in receiving 'the lion's share of the cake' from the government purse.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, by the eve of the 1973 election, the NDP government had implemented several major policies favourable to the ethnic interests of the French community. Larry Desjardins had played a prominent role in initiating and publicizing these policies. Their effect on the political allegiance of the French voters was soon to be demonstrated.

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<sup>52</sup>Personal Interview with René Chartier, February 7, 1976.

## CHAPTER FIVE. THE 1973 ST. BONIFACE ELECTION

With the dissolution of the Manitoba legislature on May 25 and the issuing of writs for a provincial election on June 28, the province faced a changed political situation from that of four years ago. Since then, both opposition parties had undergone leadership changes. On October 31, 1970 the Liberals chose a new leader, Israel Asper, a Jewish tax lawyer from Winnipeg. Although inexperienced politically, he won a seat in the legislature in a byelection in June 1971. A Conservative convention in February of that year selected Sidney Spivak as party leader to succeed Walter Weir. A Jewish businessman from Winnipeg, Spivak was the MLA for River Heights; and had been Industry and Commerce Minister in the Conservative administration from 1966 to 1969. The new Tory leader was considered to be a moderate progressive in the tradition of Duff Roblin. Larry Desjardins, meanwhile, having supported the Schreyer government since the last election, had become a NDP member and, as a cabinet minister, had helped to develop policies favourable to the French community. Whether these changes would result in a political change among French voters in St. Boniface remained to be seen.

Before the dissolution, however, some seven hundred persons attended the May 15 NDP nomination meeting in St. Boniface. The number of registered delegates was an all-time high. Desjardins was challenged for the nomination by Maurice Peloquin, a young real estate agent and former Liberal.<sup>1</sup> To counteract his opponent's reputation as a protector of

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<sup>1</sup> Some party members 'referred obliquely' to Peloquin's challenge as a Liberal attempt to embarrass Desjardins. One NDP official saw the final vote as 'a victory over Renald Guay [the son] of Joseph Guay, St. Boniface Courier (henceforth abbreviated as SBC) , May 23, 1973.

French interests, Peloquin questioned 'why we should defend the French cause' because, as he saw it, 'this issue has been ground right into the dirt and we have defended the cause long enough'.<sup>2</sup> In response, Desjardins praised the government for having done more for the riding 'than all the previous governments put together',<sup>3</sup> and stressed his close association with Premier Schreyer. Plastic badges bearing a picture of the two men were in abundance. A statement from the premier, pledging his support to Desjardins and the need for his re-election, was on all of the seats. And Schreyer himself delivered the keynote address. Desjardins won the nomination by a vote of 383 to 109 and then predicted an easy win in the upcoming election, 'with the endorsement and campaigning support of Mr. Schreyer'.<sup>4</sup>

His Liberal opponent was Paul Marion, a prominent and respected French figure who was a well known local councillor and Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg. He had also been, at various times, chairman of the St. Boniface school division, the Board of Trustees for the St. Boniface Parish, the Police Commission and the Museum Board. A long-time Conservative, he explained that with the departure of Roblin there remained 'no room in the (Conservative) party for a French Canadian'. He joined the Liberal party, as he recalled, because it 'served French Manitobans very, very well, federally and provincially'; because Asper had 'an excellent position on French Manitobans...(and) put the arm on me and convinced me'; and

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<sup>2</sup>'Desjardins gets NDP nod', WT, May 15, 1973.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>'June election a step nearer', WT, May 16, 1973.

because he could 'fit very well' into the Liberal caucus.<sup>5</sup> In his May 1 announcement that he would run for the Liberal nomination in St. Boniface, Marion said that the party 'has contributed in very large measure to the survival of the French language and culture in Manitoba' and that it would 'be innovative regarding programmes for the advancement of the French fact'.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, at the May 25 Liberal nomination meeting, attended by some two hundred and fifty people, Asper selected him as the deputy leader of the party's French wing because he was 'the man we look to for guidance in furthering Francophone culture in Manitoba'.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to this Liberal optimism was the Conservative realization that St. Boniface remained politically hopeless for them. Although Spivak described himself as an 'ethnic leader'; promised to develop the French language and culture in Manitoba; and supported the federal bilingualism policy as being 'in the best interests of Canada', such efforts appeared to be too little and too late.<sup>8</sup> Comments by Art Moug, the Tory member for Charleswood, that questioned the need for a French cultural centre, coupled with the resignation decision of Gabe Girard, the Emerson MLA and sole French Conservative member, seemed to

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<sup>5</sup> Marion Interview. However, others advanced different explanations of this switch: he was making a trial run to succeed Steven Juba as mayor by testing his popularity-Painchaud Interview; 'the Guay clan egged him on to run' in order to eliminate him as a possible opponent federally--Hébert Interview; the Liberals 'tried to use him' to get back at Desjardins--Desjardins Interview; and he realized that to be elected in St. Boniface he had to run as a Liberal rather than a Conservative--Spivak Interview. Spivak later recalled that 'we tried everything' to keep him in the Conservative party but to no avail. Spivak Interview.

<sup>6</sup> 'Marion to run for Grits', WT, May 1, 1973.

<sup>7</sup> 'Marion: French deputy', WT, May 25, 1973.

<sup>8</sup> 'Spivak pledges cultural aid', WT, May 17, 1973.

have reduced further the party's already low standing among French voters.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the Conservatives did not field a candidate in the 1973 St. Boniface election. Given the poor showing there in the last election, the weak local party organization and the absence of a suitable candidate, Spivak later recalled that 'there was no sense in running there'.<sup>10</sup> Another interpretation saw this Conservative abstention as motivated by a desire to defeat Desjardins with a united anti-NDP vote. The consensus later was that this did in fact help Marion's position.<sup>11</sup>

This Tory absence presented the French voters in St. Boniface with a clear choice between their strong Liberal tradition and the Desjardins-Schreyer team with its favourable legislative record on French issues:

While Mr. Desjardins can brag about the direct accomplishments of the Schreyer government in making French an acceptable language of instruction in Manitoba schools, Councillor Marion can lean on the federal Liberals' contributions to French Canadian advancement.<sup>12</sup>

The NDP campaign certainly made use of the Schreyer presence and his legislative record on French matters. For instance, at a June 22 wine and cheese party in le Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, the premier, speaking in French, defended his government's linguistic and cultural

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<sup>9</sup> Debates, April 30, 1973, p. 2225; 'Girard won't run', WT, June 9, 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Spivak Interview.

<sup>11</sup> On election night Marion claimed: 'Had there been a Tory candidate, probably the sailing would not have been as easy'. ['Schreyer calls win decisive', WT, June 29, 1973]. A newspaper analysis stated that 'le vote anglophone, de tradition conservatrice, a sans doute profité à M. Marion en l'absence d'autre candidat' ['Le ministre Desjardins défait?', SBC, June 4, 1973]. Although Desjardins recalled that it was not all that clear, he believed that the Conservative presence in the 1974 by-election did hurt Marion more than himself [Desjardins Interview].

<sup>12</sup> 'NDP Expects to do Well in East Wpg. Seats', WFP, June 27, 1973.



policies. Citing as an example Bill 113 that permitted French instructional use in public schools, he said, 'I'm not pretending we've solved all the problems of assuring the validity of the French community, but we've certainly made a strong start in that direction'.<sup>13</sup> He added that he would be personally disappointed to win elsewhere in the province but to see Desjardins defeated. To avoid such a defeat, NDP ads emphasized Desjardins' status as a strong defender of French interests which had been advanced in several favourable government policies; and his close personal and political relationship with the popular premier:

Le plupart des franco-manitobains participent plus activement en 1973 à la vie de leur communauté. Et cela grâce aux outils que leur ont obtenus Laurent Desjardins et Ed Schreyer: -le bill 113, l'Institut Pédagogique, le Centre Cultural de Saint-Boniface; -les subventions aux associations; -la législation sur le bilinguisme à l'hôtel de ville de Winnipeg, et dans la communauté de St.-Boniface.<sup>14</sup>

Such ads also pointed out Desjardins' future effectiveness as a prominent minister in the government and his desire 'continuer le travail déjà commencé'.<sup>15</sup>

On the Liberal side, Asper told a June 19 press conference that his party remained 'the leading force in recognizing the French fact' because the NDP government paid only lip service' to French interests. He also stressed the importance of Marion, the party's French leader, returning St. Boniface to the Liberal fold.<sup>16</sup>

Such an event appeared imminent, at least according to Marion

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<sup>13</sup> 'Joie de vivre crimped by law', WT, June 13, 1973.

<sup>14</sup> LL, 20 juin 1973, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> 'Backing for minority govt?', WT, June 19, 1973.

on June 13 when he claimed that he was running five to one ahead of his opponent in the largely French area east of the St. Boniface Hospital. This optimism stemmed in part from the strong Liberal campaign machine, reportedly 'one of the smoothest in the race' with 'une activité fantastique'.<sup>17</sup> Headed by campaign manager Renalt Guay, the Liberal workers constituted 'a hell of a good team', waging an extensive door-to-door campaign and delivering 'un déluge d'affichage comme on a rarement vu'.<sup>18</sup> There was a large headquarters at the Goulet shopping centre, while a school bus, with bilingual banners proclaiming 'En roulant avec Marion' and 'Rolling with Marion', transported the active workers. The local organization made a big impression at the June 24 Liberal rally at the St. James Civic Centre, as Marion arrived in the colourfully decorated bus packed with his vocal supporters whose tunes were led by a sword-wielding conductor.<sup>19</sup> The active campaigning support of such French Liberal stalwarts as Senator Gildas Molgat and local MP Joseph Guay, especially in their half dozen visits to the nuns in the riding's three convents, also contributed to the Marion effort.

This Liberal campaign, however, also resulted in several misrepresentations and 'de fulgurantes promesses'.<sup>20</sup> Several workers reportedly spread derogatory references about Desjardins' personal life and marital troubles. There appeared to be warnings to the elderly about a likely Communist invasion of the port of Churchill in northern

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<sup>17</sup> 'A mercy errand for Liberals', WT, June 13, 1973; 'Les votes à bon marché', SBC, July 11, 1973.

<sup>18</sup> Marion Interview; 'Le ministre Desjardins défait?', SBC, July 4, 1973.

<sup>19</sup> 'Tory polls called 'phoney'', WT, June 25, 1973.

<sup>20</sup> 'Le ministre Desjardins défait?', SBC, July 4, 1973.

Manitoba if the NDP were re-elected and to the clergy that Desjardins favoured abortion. One newspaper condemned the over-zealous effort of 'deux cabaleurs qui répété des faussetés sur les droits du français au Manitoba et sont allés jusqu' à évoquer le fantôme du communisme'.<sup>21</sup> In one visit that Marion, Molgat and Guay made to the Grey Nuns convent, the Liberal MP allegedly delivered a bitter harangue on the evils of socialism that 'literally frightened the daylight out of them'.<sup>22</sup> In addition, one observer later claimed that Desjardins' political integrity was questioned' to such an extent that Marion was, in effect, telling the voters that 'you can't vote for a turncoat'.<sup>23</sup> Desjardins, in turn, defended his political change since 1969 by saying that he remained committed to the same liberal principles as when he was first elected and that the only difference was that he had found another man, Schreyer, who shared almost exactly the same ideas: 'I call my beliefs liberalism. He calls his social democracy'.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, even though he ran under a new political label, Desjardins was successful in retaining the support of most of St. Boniface's 'community leaders' who had benefited from the Schreyer government's programmes in the last four years.<sup>25</sup> Marion later complained that 'the French Manitoban establishment was anti-Marion'.<sup>26</sup> One explanation for this claimed that these leaders 'felt that you get things

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<sup>21</sup> 'Les votes à bon marché', SBC, July 11, 1973.

<sup>22</sup> Hébert Interview.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>24</sup> 'Schreyer Says Antics of PCs and Libs are Amusing', WFP, June 23, 1973.

<sup>25</sup> Hébert Interview.

<sup>26</sup> Marion Interview.

done by going with the government'.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, it was undeniable that Desjardins 'certainly lost some support: old-liners and some important grass-roots'.<sup>28</sup> The 'Guay clique' in the St. Boniface Liberal party especially encouraged this loss. Desjardins later attributed this strong Guay opposition to the fact that he had remained neutral in 1968, refusing to support Joseph Guay in his bid to win the federal Liberal nomination in St. Boniface from Veteran Affairs Minister, Roger Teillet. At that time, according to Desjardins, Renalt Guay, the 'vindictive' son of Joseph Guay, had 'threatened to get me' eventually.<sup>29</sup> This Guay influence in 1973 kept people like the Chaput brothers, who ran a Solo Store on Hamel Street and who were quite influential in recruiting campaign workers, from staying with Desjardins. For other French Liberals, it remained 'literally sacrilege' to vote for any other party.<sup>30</sup> The strength of 'la fameuse tradition libérale de Saint-Boniface' reportedly existed even among the young voters; where 'on a vu des jeunes gens de moins de 20 ans qui votaient pour la première fois déclarer candidement que les Canadiens français, ça vote libéral'.<sup>31</sup> The nuns in the three convents located in polls 4, 5, and 6, for instance, also remained true to this Liberal tradition. An accusation was later made that certain key clergy

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<sup>27</sup> Hébert Interview.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Desjardins Interview.

<sup>30</sup> Hébert Interview.

<sup>31</sup> 'Le ministre Desjardins défait?', SBC, July 4, 1973.

officials tended to favour the Liberals in arranging the traditional teas between the candidates and the clergy: 'If the top nun is on your side, she'll help you. It kind of helps to have the Archbishop on your side because, if you rub him the wrong way, he could do a lot of harm.'<sup>32</sup> A subsequent analysis concluded that 'Desjardins a perdu le vote des communautés religieuses', as Marion explained 'que ces électeurs on toujours voté libéral' and Desjardins claimed 'qu'on a 'fait peur' aux religieuses'.<sup>33</sup>

Although the religious community remained faithful to its Liberal tradition, the overall St. Boniface election results ended in a virtual dead heat, with the Liberals retaining 54 per cent of the vote in the large French districts while the NDP won a similar majority of the vote in the large non-French areas. Nevertheless, the NDP almost doubled its 1969 French vote while the Liberals suffered their greatest loss here. On the other hand, non-French voters gave the NDP its smallest gain and the Liberals their only gain. Although the Liberals did slightly better in the poorer areas, the income split for each party was very evenly distributed.

These results indicated that the French voters in St. Boniface had substantially transferred their allegiance from the Liberals to the NDP, although the former still retained a small majority of their votes. On election night, however, Desjardins voiced his disappointment that this French majority remained within the Liberal fold:

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<sup>32</sup> Hébert Interview.

<sup>33</sup> 'Retombée électorale', SBC, July 25, 1973.

TABLE 5.1

The 1973 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote

Poll Group*	No. of Polls	French Voters		Votes Cast	Party Vote		% Polls Won	
		No.	%		Lib.	NDP	Lib.	NDP
1	7	2,819	81.6	2,714	54.1	45.8	71.4	28.6
2	7	2,563	60.7	2,961	50.3	49.7	57.1	42.9
3	<u>7</u>	<u>1,438</u>	<u>41.6</u>	<u>2,674</u>	<u>45.1</u>	<u>54.8</u>	<u>42.8</u>	<u>57.2</u>
	21	6,820	61.3	8,349	49.9	50.1	57.1	42.9

\* Poll Group: % French Voters:

1	75-100
2	50-75
3	25-50

TABLE 5.2

The 1973 St. Boniface Election: Party Vote Change

Poll Group	% Party Vote Change	
	Lib.	NDP
1	-12.1	+21.0
2	- 7.8	+20.9
3	<u>+ 4.6</u>	<u>+11.5</u>
	- 3.9	+17.0

TABLE 5.3

## The 1973 St. Boniface Election: Income

Census Tract	Av. Male Income (\$)	% French Voters	Votes Cast	% Party Lib	Vote NDP
116	5,682	60.8	3,461	51.2	48.8
117	5,783	71.3	2,013	54.1	45.9
113	5,840	38.7	1,529	40.5	59.5
114	6,080	48.9	<u>1,346</u>	<u>50.7</u>	<u>49.3</u>
			8,349	49.9	50.1

Source: The 1971 Census of Canada, Population and housing characteristics by census tracts - Winnipeg, Cat. 95-723, (CT-23A), March, 1973.

The first thing that comes to mind is bitterness and frustration: I lost out in the French polls. These people had their French rights respected by the Schreyer government and they turned their backs on it.<sup>34</sup>

But this was not the case. A very large French shift from the Liberals to the NDP did occur but simply not to the extent necessary to secure a NDP majority. On election night the premier hoped that Desjardins' defeat, 'a matter of great personal sadness to me', would be only 'temporary'.<sup>35</sup> In this case, the premier's prediction proved accurate.

<sup>34</sup> 'St. B. By-Elec. Eminent', SBC, July 4, 1973.

<sup>35</sup> 'Schreyer calls win decisive', WT, June 29, 1973.

## CHAPTER SIX. THE 1974 ST. BONIFACE BY-ELECTION

The year following the 1973 St. Boniface election saw the extremely close result contested in the courts. Meanwhile, Paul Marion served in the legislature as the Liberal member for St. Boniface. Larry Desjardins remained as Cultural Affairs Minister until January 28, 1974, however, when Premier Schreyer, citing his 'energetic and devoted service to the people of Manitoba' and his 'considerable public and administrative experience', appointed him to the chairmanship of the Manitoba Health Services Commission.<sup>1</sup> Tory leader Spivak criticized this appointment as 'political patronage of the most blatant sort' while Liberal leader Asper openly 'wondered who owed how much to whom'.<sup>2</sup> The appointment evidently reflected 'the premier's indebtedness...(and) close affiliation and the particular consideration for Mr. Desjardins'.<sup>3</sup> Although some NDP caucus members reportedly 'looked askance' at the appointment, the premier 'apparently mollified' them.<sup>4</sup>

On November 1, 1974, the Court of Queen's Bench nullified the 1973 St. Boniface election due to certain irregularities and abuses under the Controverted Election Act.<sup>5</sup> A by-election was called for Friday, December

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<sup>1</sup> 'Urban Affairs Switch', WFP, January 29, 1974.

<sup>2</sup> 'Cabinet changes', WT, January 31, 1974; 'Mixed mood over change in cabinet', WT, January 29, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mind-Boggling Appointment', WFP, January 29, 1974.

<sup>4</sup> 'Mixed mood over change in cabinet', WT, January 29, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> 'Marion Election Voided', WFP, November 1, 1974. The court noted several irregularities such as impersonation, double voting and legitimate voters not being allowed to cast their ballots. However, Mr. Justices Nitikman and Solomon stressed that 'no blame or stigma' should be attached to either Returning Officer Achilles Desaulnier or Paul Marion.



20, 1974. It loomed as an important political contest that would indicate if the French shift from the Liberals to the NDP would continue.

The Liberals tried to halt this shift by stressing their long association, provincially and federally, with the St. Boniface riding. Party advertisements pointed out 'une longue tradition veut que St.-Boniface élise des représentants Libéraux' and urged the voters to 'Let's Keep It That Way'.<sup>6</sup> Liberal candidate Marion kept reminding the electorate of this voting tradition:

The Liberal party has been a part of the community of St. Boniface for many years. The Liberal party has, as a fundamental principle, advanced the cause of the people of St. Boniface. No other political party has ever done more for the people of St. Boniface and their institutions than the Liberal party. This has continued in spite of the political disadvantages suffered because of the commitment to this principle. The Liberal party has never wavered or backed down.<sup>7</sup>

He confidently predicted that 'the tradition and heritage involved in the support St. Boniface gives to Liberals will not be violated' in the by-election.<sup>8</sup> Desjardins, in turn, protested against what he termed his opponent's 'talking about his father and grandfather in politics'.<sup>9</sup>

The provincial Liberals also tried to identify themselves closely with the federal Liberals. One newspaper ad announced that 'St.-Boniface est certainement Libéral et voici pourquoi', followed by pictures of Prime Minister Trudeau and local MP Joseph Guay.<sup>10</sup> Another such ad pictured Marion with Trudeau, Guay, Supply and Services Minister Jean

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<sup>6</sup> LL, December 11, 1974, p. 4; SBC, December 11, 1974, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> 'Principle or Opportunism?', SBC, December 11, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> 'Schreyer Attacks Liberal Tactics', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>10</sup> LL, December 11, 1974, p. 4; SBC, December 11, 1974, p. 13.

Pierre Goyer and Defense Minister James Richardson, accompanied by the  
comment:

Ces personnalités d'envergure nationale ont fait campagne active en faveur de Paul Marion. Ils témoignent que tous les Libéraux, tant au niveau fédéral qu'au niveau provincial, forment un parti unique et recherchent le même but.<sup>11</sup>

Although Marion 'stuck glued to the prime minister's side' during his December 5 visit to Winnipeg, Trudeau 'managed a neat sidestepping of overt politicking' by not openly indulging in the local by-election campaign.<sup>12</sup> Marion's organization of some three hundred workers, 'most of them...experienced workers from the powerful election machine of Joseph Guay', was amply assisted, however, by the active campaigning of such 'heavy federal Liberal fire power' as Guay, Goyer, Richardson, Secretary of State Gerard Pelletier and the National Liberal President, Senator Gildas Molgat.<sup>13</sup>

This federal presence resulted in charges that the Liberals tried to leave 'the impression it's a federal campaign, not a provincial by-election' and that 'the Liberals are campaigning as their alter-ego, the federal government'.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Schreyer complained that the Liberal

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<sup>11</sup> LL, December 18, 1974, p. 6; SBC, December 18, 1974, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> 'An Evening of Barbs and Banalities', WFP, December 6, 1974; 'Trudeau à Wpg: une visite à double impact', LL, December 11, 1974. Marion later recalled that 'we asked him not to campaign actively' because it was 'not right for the prime minister who was in the federal not the provincial arena' to enter a local by-election campaign; and because Marion did not wish to damage in any way the good rapport between Trudeau and Schreyer in federal-provincial relations. Marion Interview.

<sup>13</sup> 'Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974; 'An Evening of Barbs and Banalities', WFP, December 6, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> 'Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974; 'Who Spent How Much On What?', WFP, December 19, 1974.

campaign made it difficult to tell whether it was a federal or a provincial contest.<sup>15</sup> In defense, Marion claimed that he was only 'fighting fire with fire' as federal NDP organizers were also present during the campaign, while Asper said he was proud that the party's two levels were 'standing up together.'<sup>16</sup>

Almost as evident as this heavy federal Liberal presence was the striking absence of Asper from the campaign. Reports claimed that 'Mr. Marion says he didn't want Mr. Asper around because he hurt his cause last time', the Liberal leader only admitted that 'I haven't been speaking because it was decided my poor French would cost us votes'.<sup>17</sup> Marion subsequently recalled that 'he didn't want Asper' because his 'pushy, rapid shooting from the hip' style of hard-sell campaigning alienated voters.<sup>18</sup>

As the Liberals heavily stressed the party aspect, the NDP campaign was one in which the 'party label was played down as much as possible'.<sup>19</sup> Desjardins later maintained that this was done because 'for a French Canadian to be NDP was like being communist still'.<sup>20</sup> The historical rejection of the NDP and the heavy criticism of Desjardins' political

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<sup>15</sup> 'Schreyer Attacks Liberal Tactics', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>16</sup> Marion Interview; 'Pelletier Attacks Desjardins' Claims', WFP, December 16, 1974. Jean Hébert, however, disagreed: 'I hate to contradict Mr. Marion, but I can assure you that no 'federal' organizers were lurking about the constituency. We had one outside organizer: a staff person from the provincial party office.' Hébert Correspondence, March 17, 1976.

<sup>17</sup> Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974; 'Federal party backs Marion', WT, December 16, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Marion Interview.

<sup>19</sup> 'Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>20</sup> Desjardins Interview.

conversion resulted in party brochures, lawn signs and newspaper advertisements hardly mentioning the party name.<sup>21</sup>

Instead, there was a strong emphasis on the person of the premier and his close relationship with Desjardins over the years. Indeed, the latter said that he decided to run as the NDP candidate in the by-election only after the premier had publicly promised to remain as leader at least until the next general election. The premier's announcement to this effect reportedly resulted from 'pressure from Mr. Desjardins' and was 'the condition under which Mr. Desjardins agreed to leave the hospital commission chairmanship--a job he likes very much--and return to the political arena where he has been buffeted severely'.<sup>22</sup> It was repeatedly emphasized that Desjardins 'bears more allegiance to the premier than to hard-and-fast NDP tenets'.<sup>23</sup> He described his candidacy as 'an identification more with Schreyer than with the NDP' and stressed 'how his whole association with the NDP was based on his friendship and great admiration for Mr. Schreyer'.<sup>24</sup>

One observer saw the by-election campaign as 'a continuation of the

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<sup>21</sup>Jean Hébert, however, later disagreed somewhat: 'The small lawn signs bore no reference to the party. However, they were printed in 1973 for the general election....We had 125 4 x 8' signs all over the constituency, all bearing the initials 'NDP-NDP' in quite bold print. The candidate's calling cards featured the party name in much the same way as a ballot does, and our major leaflet (the last one) did the same'. Hébert Correspondence. Nevertheless, Desjardins recalled that his party affiliation was certainly not emphasized during the campaign. Desjardins Interview.

<sup>22</sup>'Schreyer To Remain As Leader', WFP, November 2, 1974.

<sup>23</sup>'Health portfolio offered after vote: Desjardins', WFP, November 5, 1974.

<sup>24</sup>Desjardins Interview; 'Desjardins Seeks NDP Nomination', WFP, November, 18, 1974.

close links of friendship and fortune that have bound the men since the June 1969 election'.<sup>25</sup> The 'high profile of Mr. Schreyer', who enjoyed 'an extremely good reputation' among French voters, was seen as the 'most important factor' in the campaign.<sup>26</sup> NDP lawn signs prominently displayed his name. Newspaper ads carried a picture of the two men with the message: 'Cette fois, soyez de l'équipe Schreyer',<sup>27</sup> and Schreyer personally campaigned at shopping centres, elderly citizen homes and local pubs. In the last week of the campaign, a Tribune survey concluded that the premier had 'changed it from a contest between candidates...to a vote of confidence in the premier'.<sup>28</sup> In retrospect, Marion said that the St. Boniface voters felt that they had 'a debt to the premier'; while Spivak saw the by-election as a 'recognition of his influence'.<sup>29</sup> During the campaign, however, the Liberals complained that the man they were fighting was not Desjardins but Schreyer.

In contrast, the Conservative campaign again suffered from the lack of a strong candidate. Although the local party organization originally wanted to run a non-French-speaking candidate, Spivak intervened as he wished to see a French candidate, in order to 'hold the party back from its natural tendencies which would have been disastrous'. He

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<sup>25</sup>'Schreyer to Remain as Leader', WFP, November 2, 1974.

<sup>26</sup>'Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>27</sup>LL, November 27, 1974, p. 7; SBC, November 27, 1974, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup>'St. Boniface shows trend to NDP, but...', WT, December 18, 1974. Desjardins later questioned this survey's accuracy because, in his opinion, it exaggerated Schreyer's limited campaigning and overestimated his ability to change many votes in a short period. Desjardins Interview.

<sup>29</sup>Marion Interview; Spivak Interview.

tried, unsuccessfully, to draft Camille Legal, a prominent local public figure who would have been 'a most respectable candidate'.<sup>30</sup> Instead, the candidate finally chosen was Paul Fredette, a self-employed businessman and professional singer best known for his renditions of the national anthem at Blue Bomber football games. His campaign literature presented him as 'an independent businessman with a distinguished musical career' and 'a man who understands the cultural and historical significance of St. Boniface'.<sup>31</sup> He admitted he was a political unknown, but claimed that many voters remembered him from the days when he had delivered bread in the area. Although he conducted an energetic door-to-door campaign, he suffered from an organization which was 'extremely small by comparison to the other two parties'. Nor was he likely helped much by pamphlets such as the one that pictured him in a garbage dump proclaiming: 'Attention - L'Avenir est entre vos mains'.<sup>32</sup> His campaign stressed that the Tories were the only credible alternative to the NDP government: 'Votre seule alternative digne de confiance: Le Parti Conservateur Progressiste est l'opposition officielle dans cette province, et le seule parti capable de dissoudre le NDP aux prochaines elections'.<sup>33</sup>

Fredette's argument that his party was the only serious alternative to the NDP was met by his opponents' claims that they would be in the best strategic position to represent the riding. Marion said that he offered

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<sup>30</sup> Spivak Interview.

<sup>31</sup> SBC, December 18, 1974, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> 'Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974. 'Attention!', Conservative election pamphlet.

<sup>33</sup> LL, December 11, 1974, p. 17; SBC, December 11, 1974, p. 2.

the voters a choice between 'a strong voice in the legislature or a voice which is lost in the government majority.'<sup>34</sup> As 'the leading prospect' to replace Asper, Marion declared that 'his candidacy for the Liberal leadership was not a bluff.'<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, the NDP stressed that Desjardins, if elected, would become the Health Minister in a Schreyer cabinet where he could exert his authority on behalf of his constituents:

Dans cette election, vous pouvez élire: un homme au sein du gouvernement, là où se prennent les décisions, là où il peut travailler pour Saint-Boniface. OU un homme relégué à l'arrière-plan, à l'écart, sur les banquettes de l'opposition. A vous de choisir. <sup>36</sup>

Desjardins was convinced that the people would opt for 'a strong voice in government.'<sup>37</sup>

Both the NDP and the Liberals tried to convince the French voters that each was the best party to champion their interests: 'Generally, the campaign has centered on whether the federal Liberal party or the provincial NDP has been the chief benefactor of the riding and its largely French Canadian residents.'<sup>38</sup> On December 14, Schreyer criticized a Liberal brochure which pictured a senior citizen's home, the St. Boniface Pedagogical Institute and the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobian, with the message: 'Ces Projets on été réalisés au moyen de fonds pourvus

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<sup>34</sup> 'Principles or Opportunism?', SBC, December 11, 1974, p.

<sup>35</sup> 'Marion Liberal Candidate', SBC, November 19, 1974.

<sup>36</sup> LL, November 27, 1974, p. 19; SBC, December 4, 1974, p.6.

<sup>37</sup> 'Desjardins to contest by-election nomination', WT, November 18, 1974. This sentiment was expressed in a local newspaper account following the 1973 election: 'St.-Boniface aura perdu une voix dans le cabinet.' 'Le ministre Desjardins défait?', SBC, July 4, 1973.

<sup>38</sup> 'St. Boniface By-election Friday', WT, December 19, 1974.

par un gouvernement Libéral. Aucun gouvernement n'a fait autant que les Libéraux pour promouvoir les intérêts de Saint-Boniface'.<sup>39</sup> The premier scorned the provincial Liberals' attempt to claim credit for these institutions:

I know, and everyone knows, they had nothing to do with them.... While the federal government helped with projects in St. Boniface, the provincial Liberal party had nothing to do with them, and it was the provincial NDP that represented the interests of Manitoba in St. Boniface.<sup>40</sup>

He denied that 'all of the things that have happened in St. Boniface in the past five years happened because of the Liberal party';<sup>41</sup> and pointed out that Desjardins' role in building these institutions was 'very central, very crucial, very important.'<sup>42</sup> Indeed,,as one NDP supporter put it: 'Whoever built the facilities, it was not the provincial Liberals.'<sup>43</sup> Two days later, Secretary of State Pelletier in a news conference accused the NDP of 'unwarranted claims' in its campaign literature, particularly a sheet distributed to elderly citizens saying that the NDP government had built four senior citizen residences in St. Boniface. He said that this was 'intentionally misleading' because 'any honest presentation of the case would have demanded acknowledgement of the federal government's massive participation.' Pelletier especially resented the NDP assertion that it had 'a monopoly on helping Francophones in Manitoba.'<sup>44</sup> Joseph

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<sup>39</sup> SBC, November 18, 1974. p.16.

<sup>40</sup> 'Schreyer says: Senior Citizen Rent Subsidies Possible', SBC, December 18, 1974.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>42</sup> 'Schreyer Attacks Liberal Tactics', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>43</sup> 'Who Spent How Much On What?', WFP, December 19, 1974.

<sup>44</sup> 'Pelletier Attacks Desjardins' Claims', WFP, December 16, 1974.



Guay accused Desjardins of 'lying to the people' because 'to say the senior citizen homes were built by the Province of Manitoba is far from the truth'.<sup>45</sup> This dispute over 'who spent how much on what', with each party 'demanding recognition' for its efforts, indicated the conflict over which party deserved the support of the French community.<sup>46</sup>

This heated conflict produced 'a dirty campaign, with lots of rumours and whisper campaigns going on'.<sup>47</sup> Although it was 'expected to be a mud-slinger', the campaign deteriorated into 'one of the hardest fought and possibly the dirtiest political battle in some time'.<sup>48</sup> Desjardins claimed that he had been called 'a draft-dodger, a drunk' by the Liberals who indulged in 'many lies, half-truths, innuendos, scare tactics, and character assassinations'.<sup>49</sup> Marion reportedly stooped to 'lies and deceit', 'irrational accusations', 'slanderous and vindictive statements'.<sup>50</sup> For example, Desjardins said that, whereas Marion's move to the Liberals was portrayed as a 'divine conversion. It was St. Paul all over again', his switch to the NDP made him a 'real Judas, a real turncoat'.<sup>51</sup> In response to Marion's charge that the NDP was intimidating and blackmailing voters, Schreyer called it 'a disgusting commentary' that was 'nasty and stupid'.<sup>52</sup> The NDP condemned 'the Liberal

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<sup>45</sup> 'Desjardins Lying to People: Guay', SBC, December 19, 1974.

<sup>46</sup> 'Who Spent How Much on What?', WFP, December 19, 1974.

<sup>47</sup> 'Popularity Contest Under Way in St. B.', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>48</sup> 'St. B. By-election Is Tough', WFP, November, 19, 1974.

<sup>49</sup> 'Desjardins set to run for NDP in St. Bon.', WT, November 21, 1974.

<sup>50</sup> 'Principles or Opportunism?', SBC, December 11, 1974.

<sup>51</sup> 'Desjardins set to run for NDP in St. Bon.', WT, November 21, 1974.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.; 'Desjardins Carries NDP Banner', SBC, December 4, 1974.

rumour-mill' that spread personal and ideological smears: 'They're scaring the old people with communism and that sort of thing. They're doing this abortion business with the Catholics'.<sup>53</sup> Desjardins scorned the Liberal allegation that a deal had been made for Camille Legal's support and 'the suggestion that the NDP is blackmailing Autopac agents'.<sup>54</sup>

The Liberals also alleged mistreatment and misrepresentation. Pelletier told reporters that he wanted to stop a 'whispering campaign that he had promised to support Desjardins in the by-election'.<sup>55</sup> Marion accused Desjardins of 'blatant opportunism' and the NDP of a crass attempt at vote-buying.<sup>56</sup> He charged, for example, that the NDP demanded public support from Gilbert d'Eschambault, an old Marion friend, or his application for an Autopac licence would be denied; and from Elswood Bole, a long-time Liberal on the executive of the St. Boniface Hospital, or government funds for his hospital would not be granted.<sup>57</sup> Marion predicted that voters, confronted with a 'choice between principles or opportunism', would cast their ballots against the 'opportunism and deal-making for political expediency such as occurred between my opponent and

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<sup>53</sup> 'Schreyer Attacks Liberal Tactics', WFP, December 14, 1974.

<sup>54</sup> 'Desjardins Says Opponents Swinging to Lies and Deceit', SBC, December 7, 1974.

<sup>55</sup> 'Pelletier Attacks Desjardins Claims', WFP, December 16, 1974.

<sup>56</sup> 'Principles or Opportunism?', SBC, December 11, 1974.

<sup>57</sup> 'Trois declarations', SBC, December 18, 1974. However, a prominent NDP worker recalled that Desjardins' general attitude was 'I don't deal with that kind of thing'. Hébert Interview. Desjardins subsequently claimed that no such pressure was ever put on Bole and that 'I didn't go to seek (d'Eschambault) and try to buy him'. Desjardins Interview.

the NDP since 1969'.<sup>58</sup>

However, such was not the case on by-election night. The NDP won an overall majority in the St. Boniface riding, with its majority in the heavy French districts being a little more than in the non-French areas. Thus, the French voters continued to move from the Liberals to the NDP, while the Conservatives gained some non-French votes from the other parties. In addition, the Liberals won a plurality only in the richest area, while the other income districts recorded NDP majorities.

TABLE 6.1

The 1974 St. Boniface By-Election: The Party Vote

Poll Group*	No. of Polls	French Voters		Votes Cast	% Party Vote			% Polls Won	
		No.	%		Cons.Lib.	NDP		Lib.	NDP
1	15	3,475	83.1	2,531	3.6	42.4	54.0	20.0	80.0
2	14	2,298	59.5	2,496	5.4	45.2	49.6	42.9	57.1
3	<u>12</u>	<u>1,237</u>	<u>38.5</u>	<u>1,750</u>	<u>8.1</u>	<u>41.1</u>	<u>50.7</u>	<u>25.0</u>	<u>75.0</u>
	41	7,010	62.3	6,777	5.4	43.1	51.5	29.3	70.7

\* Poll Group: %French Voters:

1	75-100
2	50-75
3	25-50

These results indicated 'a significant shift in voter preference

<sup>58</sup> 'Marion Also Seeks Party Leadership', WFP, November 19, 1974.

away from the Liberal party and toward the NDP', to such a degree that French voters 'turned their backs on tradition' by electing the NDP candidate.<sup>59</sup> The NDP took the French language vote 'at last', a party worker said'.<sup>60</sup>

TABLE 6.2

The 1974 St. Boniface By-Election: The Party Vote Change

Poll Group	% Party Vote Change	
	Lib.	NDP
1	-11.7	+ 8.2
2	- 5.1	- .1
3	<u>- 4.0</u>	<u>- 4.1</u>
	- 6.8	+ 1.4

Premier Schreyer accepted Desjardins' victory as the best possible birthday present, marking 'one of the happiest days of my political life'.<sup>61</sup> He had ample reason to be jubilant. In rejecting its Liberal tradition, St. Boniface approved his leadership and his government's French policies. Asper saw the result as 'a tribute to Schreyer. He was the difference between victory and defeat'; and Marion claimed that 'we couldn't match Schreyer. We didn't have the horses'.<sup>62</sup> The Free Press

<sup>59</sup> 'St. Boniface shows trend to NDP, but...', WT, December 18, 1974; 'St. Boniface Kicks Over the Traces: Big Lead for NDP's Desjardins', WFP, December 21, 1974.

<sup>60</sup> 'Desjardins: A political career renewed', WT, December 21, 1974.

<sup>61</sup> 'St. B. Kicks Over the Traces: Big Lead for NDP's Desjardins', WFP, December 21, 1974.

<sup>62</sup> 'Desjardins: A political career renewed', WT, December 21, 1974.

TABLE 6.3

The 1974 St. Boniface By-Election: Income

Census Tract	Av. Male Income (\$)	% French Voters	Votes Cast	% Party Vote		
				Cons.	Lib.	NDP
116	5,857	60.4	3,151	4.1	44.0	51.9
117	5,951	70.9	1,316	4.6	41.5	54.0
113	5,978	39.3	1,156	8.7	37.5	53.7
114	6,253	50.1	<u>1,154</u>	<u>6.6</u>	<u>48.0</u>	<u>45.4</u>
			6,777	5.4	43.1	51.5

Source: The 1971 Census of Canada, Population and housing characteristics by census tracts-Winnipeg, Cat. 95-723 (CT-23A), March, 1973.

saw 'a clear indication of Premier Ed Schreyer's continuing personal popularity' and the Tribune attributed the 'decisive result' to 'the personal impact of Premier Schreyer'.<sup>63</sup> Desjardins said that the attempt to maintain the Liberal tradition by close association with the federal government 'backfired' because the French voters realized that 'it wasn't a federal election' and that 'these people (i.e., federal cabinet ministers) had nothing to do with a provincial by-election'.<sup>64</sup> A veteran of Manitoba's political wars later wrote that:

<sup>63</sup> 'St. B. Kicks Over the Traces: Big Lead for NDP's Desjardins', WFP, December 21, 1974; 'Decisive Result', WT, December 23, 1974.

<sup>64</sup> 'We just couldn't lose, says Desjardins', WT, December 23, 1974.

the results reaffirmed the popularity of Premier Ed Schreyer's New Democratic Government and rewarded the political courage and persistence of the Honourable Larry Desjardins with a decisive victory.<sup>65</sup>

TABLE 6.4

St. Boniface 1969-1974: The Spearman Rank Coefficient

Year	Cons.	Lib.	NDP
1969	-.59*	+.83*	-.70*
1973	--	+.50**	-.47**
1974	-.46**	+.04	+.22

\*  
p ≤ .01.

\*\*  
p ≤ .05.

The Spearman Rank Coefficient compares the rank of each poll according to its French voter presence with the rank of its party vote. It appeared that the Liberal coefficient declined since 1969 and that the NDP one increased, again indicating a French switch from the Liberals to the NDP.

In noting this 'switch to the New Democrats' among the traditionally French voters, reporter Frances Russell speculated that the results might well be 'a continuation of the collapse of traditional voting patterns caused by the advent of Ed Schreyer'.<sup>66</sup> Certainly, by 1974 at least, the NDP had won a strong if not dominant position among French voters, a previously antagonistic group.

<sup>65</sup> Stinson, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>66</sup> 'The Premier's Happy Birthday', *WFP*, December 23, 1974.

## CHAPTER SEVEN. THE 1974 ST. BONIFACE FEDERAL ELECTION

Six months prior to the St. Boniface by-election, a federal general election took place.<sup>1</sup> Although predominantly British (40.6 per cent) rather than French (22.7 per cent), the St. Boniface federal constituency had generally been considered a French stronghold. Most party candidates and every MP in the preceding thirty years was French. In addition, the riding had a strong Liberal voting tradition. With the single exception of the 1958 Diefenbaker landslide, when the riding elected Conservative Laurier Régnier, it had consistently returned a Liberal since 1925.<sup>2</sup> In 1974, however, the non-French Conservative candidate, Dr. J.H. Hare, by increasing his party's 1972 vote of 26.1 per cent to 36.3 per cent, nearly won this traditionally French Liberal riding.<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 7.1

The 1974 St. Boniface Federal Election: The Party Vote Change<sup>4</sup>

Ethnic District	% Party Vote Change		
	Cons	Lib.	NDP
French dominant	+ 4.7	+ 2.2	- 5.6
French 20%; British 40%	+11.5	- 2.6	- 8.4
Overwhelmingly British	+10.4	- 2.6	- 7.2

<sup>1</sup>The following analysis is based on material in Michael Kinnear, 'The 1974 Federal Election in the Six Winnipeg Constituencies', an unpublished paper read at the Canadian Political Science Association meeting in Edmonton, Alberta on June 5, 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.3 and p.27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

The election results produced 'a large switch everywhere from the NDP, with the Liberals picking up a little in the French districts'.<sup>5</sup> The Conservatives gained most in the predominantly non-French areas while the only Liberal gain was in the large French districts. The general NDP loss was slightly more pronounced among non-French voters. The Conservative gains and the Liberal losses were larger in the richer areas. Regardless of the ethnic makeup of the districts, the swing to the Conservatives increased with rising incomes.

TABLE 7.2

The 1974 St. Boniface Federal Election: Income<sup>6</sup>

Census Tract	Median Income (\$)	Ethnicity:		% Party Vote Change		
		% French	% British	Cons.	Lib.	NDP
111	8,268	18.1	46.5	+13.7	- 5.9	- 7.1
112	7,547	22.6	42.2	+10.9	- 2.1	+ 7.8
105	5,989	21.9	47.9	+ 8.4	- 1.4	- 6.9

Because 'French Canadians swung slightly to the Liberals', they became even more solidly Liberal.<sup>7</sup> In other Winnipeg ridings that year, 'a decline in ethnic voting' was in evidence, as economic considerations appeared to be the single, over-riding factor.<sup>8</sup> But in St. Boniface,

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 28

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 28

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 15

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 7.



TABLE 7.3

The 1974 St. Boniface Federal Election:

The Conservative Vote Change<sup>9</sup>

Area	% Conservative Vote Change		
	Mostly French	Mixed	Overwhelmingly British
Highest Income	+6.4	+13.7	+12.3
Medium Income	+2.8	+10.9	+ 8.3
Lowest Income	+1.9	+ 8.4	+10.1

'the French issue was strongest...(and) had an adverse effect on Liberal votes, except in French majority areas'.<sup>10</sup> Ethnicity, therefore, tended to lessen the general impact of this economic factor in St. Boniface.

The provincial shift among French voters from the Liberals to the NDP did not occur at the federal level, at least not in St. Boniface where the Liberal party slightly increased its French vote in 1974. This French Liberal tradition appeared to remain intact federally as the Liberal government, in its leadership, policies and support from Quebec, was still closely identified with the French Canadian cause. The St. Boniface French, in effect, split their votes, favouring the Liberals federally and the NDP provincially, in the apparent belief that each party in its respective jurisdiction best served their ethnic interests. One newspaper account commented on this new pragmatism in French voting:

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 10 and p. 15.

Si les politiques de bilinguisme et d'aide aux minorités ont été apportées d'abord par le gouvernement fédéral, dans le domaine de l'éducation qui est de juridiction provinciale, c'est le gouvernement néo-démocrate qui a donné le grand coup. C'est peu dire si on pense à la promotion et à l'encouragement qu'ont reçu les Franco-Manitobains sous différents aspects.<sup>11</sup>

The French monolithic vote for the Liberals at all levels had ended. In this sense, the French community in St. Boniface reverted to its 1914 pattern of voting behaviour:

...federally, their sentiments tended more toward Laurier while provincially, their local needs made them incline toward Roblin .... (They) forgot their attachment to the French Canadian leader in Ottawa when marking their provincial ballots.<sup>12</sup>

Their political allegiance changed because their commitment to their own ethnic interests remained intact.

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<sup>11</sup> 'Les votes à bon marché', SBC, July 11, 1973.

<sup>12</sup> Turenne, op. cit., p. 91 and p. 98.

## CHAPTER EIGHT. CONCLUSION

From 1969 to 1974 there was a clear switch in the French vote from the Liberals to the New Democrats. The prevalence of ethnic politics during this period suggested that ethnicity rather than income accounted for this electoral change. The new political appeal of the NDP to the French electorate was also reflected in the increased number of French candidates and MLA's in that party. It was a general French switch that occurred in urban as well as rural districts and also among the elderly, a group often considered more traditional and less inclined to change. The provincial shift was not in evidence at the federal level, however, at least in St. Boniface where the Liberal party retained its French allegiance.

This French voting switch was in many ways crystallized in the personal political odyssey of Larry Desjardins from the Liberals to the NDP. It apparently also resulted from the politics of ethnic recognition involved in Premier Schreyer's personal appeal to the French community and in his government's favourable legislative record on French concerns. These factors caused the French tendency to support the party in power to replace their strong Liberal tradition.

In this way, then, the 'mischievous god' that ruled over Manitoba's mosaic transformed a politically traditional ethnic group with a historical distaste for left-wing politics into a voting group that clearly supported an NDP government. The interests of ethnicity had overturned the attachments to ideology and party.

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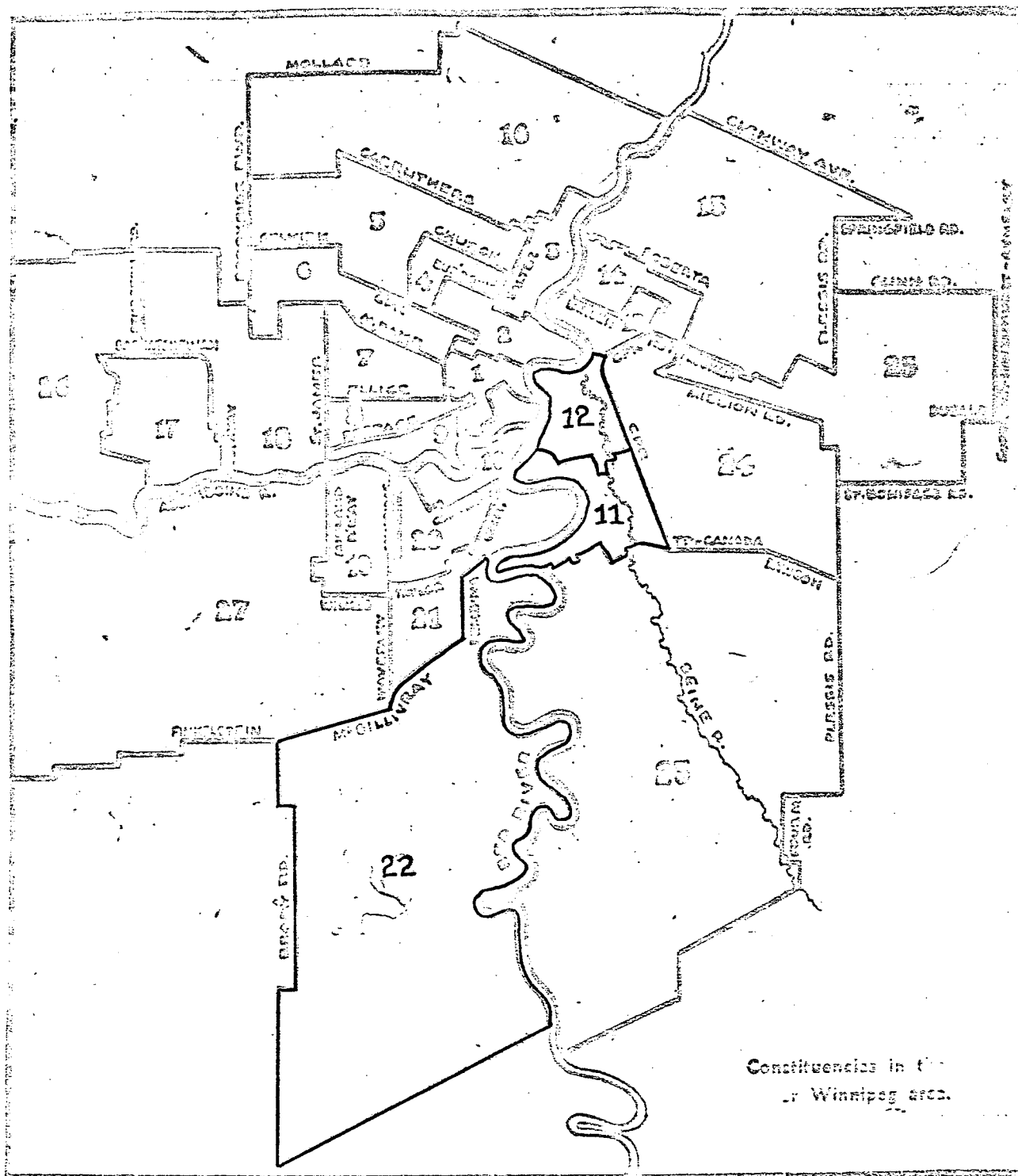
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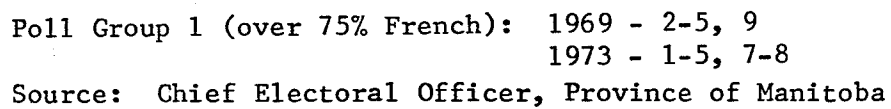


APPENDIX B: St. Boniface, St. Vital, Fort Garry: 1969 and 1973.

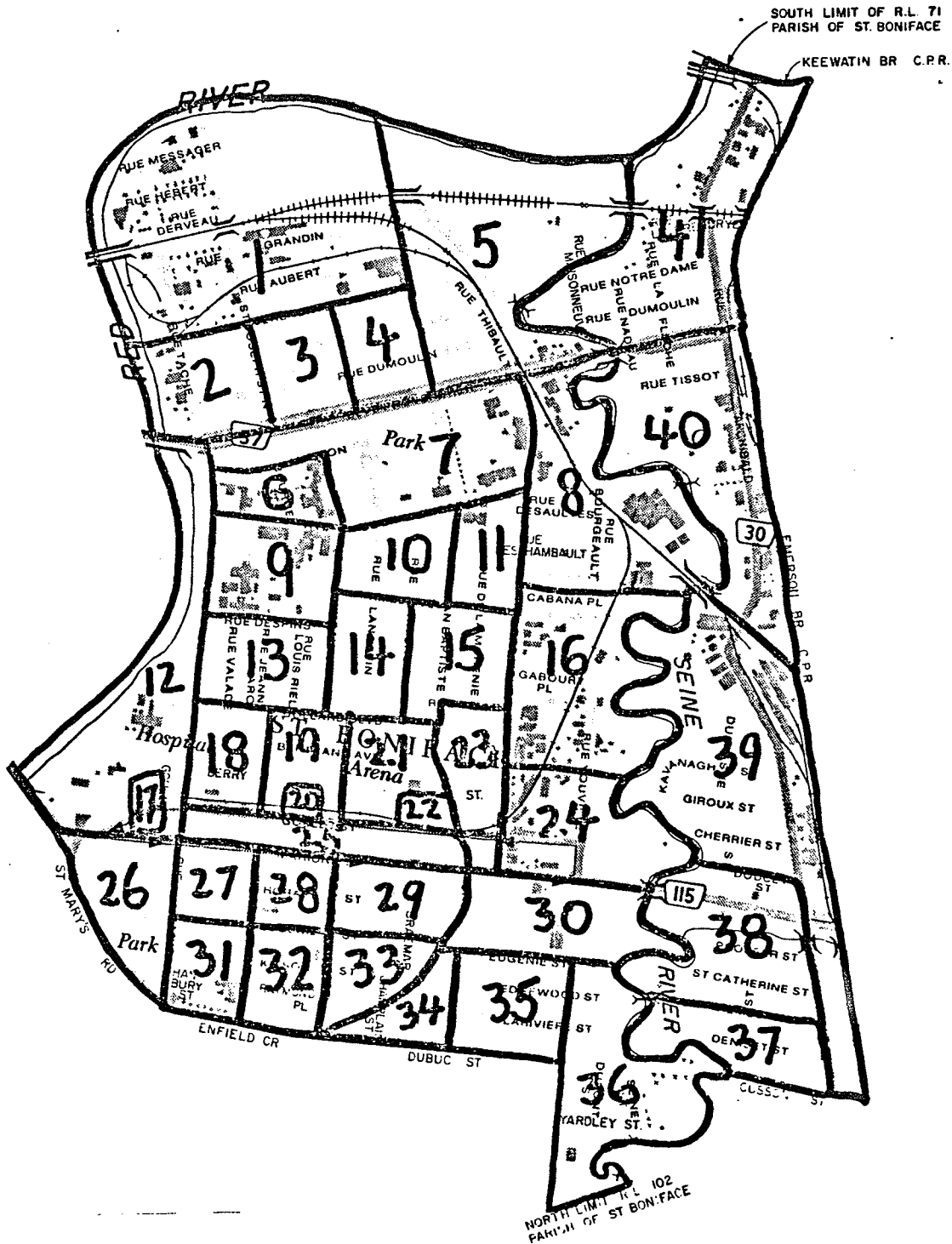


12 - St. Boniface; 11 - St. Vital; 22 - Fort Garry.

Source: WT, May 31, 1969, p. 3.



APPENDIX D: St. Boniface, 1974.



Pool Group 1 (over 75% French): 1-8, 10-11, 13-16, 40

Source: Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Manitoba