

THE ANGLO-PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF MANITOBA AND THE  
MANITOBA SCHOOL QUESTION

BY

CHRISTOPHER HACKETT

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
University of Manitoba  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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## ABSTRACT

The Manitoba School Question was one of the most contentious issues in the history of both Manitoba and Canada and it has received considerable attention from historians. However, there has been insufficient research into the climate of popular opinion in which decisions concerning the introduction of a national school system in Manitoba were made. This gap has had important consequences particularly in the long running controversy over the origins of the school question.

This thesis attempted to remedy this neglect by examining the actions and attitudes of the three major Anglo-Protestant churches in Manitoba towards education and minority rights between 1870 and 1890. The clergy and laity of these churches wielded considerable influence in Manitoba society in general and over education in specific. The thesis focused on the three largest of these churches, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church and the Church of England. In the past, these Protestant churches have been treated as homogeneous but the present work found that this assumption was inaccurate and potentially misleading. Each church emerged with its own distinct view on the role of religion in education and minority rights and on the policies of the Greenway Government.

Despite the differences, common themes among the churches were identified which highlighted the changing attitudes towards religion and education in the Province between 1870 and 1890. The influx of Ontario clergy and laity had major repercussions for the churches as well as the society around them. For the churches, it meant that new policies were developed often at the expense of traditional perspectives, with secular concerns taking priority over theological issues. In general, attitudes toward education altered such that the importance of religious instruction in the public schools became secondary to the cultural assimilation of non-English minorities, particularly French Roman Catholics.

The thesis supports the contention of recent literature that the school question was part of a long term pattern of co-option of the social and public institutions of the Province by the post-Confederation Ontario born Protestant elite rather than a brief period of demagogic anti-Catholicism. The success of the Protestant majority in passing legislation to adapt the schools to meet their own cultural agenda demonstrates the danger of a parliamentary majority when it is not bound by a strong constitution which recognizes individual and group rights.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The introduction of a national school system<sup>1</sup> in Manitoba in 1890 and the accompanying controversy, popularly known as the Manitoba School Question, is one of the most contentious issues in the history of both Manitoba and Canada. The Manitoba School Question called into question the fundamental rights of minorities within the Province and the Country. Although it is far from an isolated case, the Manitoba School Question is perhaps the clearest example of the problems inherent in managing the Canadian Confederation. It has attracted considerable attention from historians and has been approached from a variety of angles. One historian, P. E. Crunican, has suggested that the reason the school question has been of such interest to historians is largely

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<sup>1</sup> In order to appreciate any study on the school question a few definitions must be established. "National schools" refer to a non-sectarian public school system imported from Ontario, which stressed the minimizing of differences among students in order to instill a common sense of identity in all Canadians. In practice, the object of these schools was the assimilation of non-English minorities. Manitoba adopted national schools in 1890. "Denominational schools" refer to schools operated by a particular religious denomination and can be applied to the parish schools of the Red River Colony and to both sections of the dual public school system after 1871. The term "separate schools," commonly employed by proponents of national schools during the debate in Manitoba to refer to the Roman Catholic section of the dual school board, was an import from Ontario which had no validity in the Manitoba context since it implied that one half of the board was denominational while the other half was public.

because the struggle to restore the educational rights of Manitoba Roman Catholics "involved nearly every main theme of Canada's internal history - Conservative-Liberal, federal-provincial, east-west, French-English, Catholic-Protestant, church-state."<sup>2</sup> Existing works on the Manitoba School Question have concentrated mainly on the political aspects of the issue and on the role of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup> While this literature has presented a clear picture of the events associated with the issue as well as of the principal decision makers for the Government and opposition, insufficient research has been undertaken on the climate of opinion in which decisions were made. Although there is a good deal of conjecture on the public's rationale for accepting the change in the schools, there has been little research spe-

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<sup>2</sup> P. E. Crunican, Priests and Politicians: Manitoba Schools and the Election of 1896, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Main works on the political aspects are: J. W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1939); R. E. Clague, "The Political Aspects of the Manitoba School Question," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1939); E. G. Cooke, "The Federal Election of 1896 in Manitoba," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1943); D. J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: Vol. I The Young Napoleon, 1861-1900, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981); J. Hilts, "The Political Career of Thomas Greenway," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1974); J. R. Miller, "D'Alton McCarthy, Equal Rights and the Origins of the Manitoba School Question," Canadian Historical Review, Vol LIV, No. 4, 1973; T. S. Mitchell, "Forging a New Protestant Ontario on the Agricultural Frontier: Public Schools in Brandon and the Origins of the Manitoba School Question 1881-1890," Prairie Forum, Vol. XI, No. 1. pp. 33-49. Major works on the Roman Catholic Church and the school question include: Crunican; W. T. Shaw, "The Role of J. S. Ewart in the Manitoba School Question," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1959); M. S. MacGregor, Some Letters from Archbishop

cifically into this area. This gap has had important consequences, particularly in the long running controversy over the origins of the school question.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis will attempt to remedy this neglect by exploring the actions and attitudes of the clergy and laity of the major Anglo-Protestant churches in Manitoba towards education in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The Anglo-Protestant churches, specifically the Protestant churches that were English speaking and stemmed from Britain either directly or through Ontario, constituted some of the largest and most influential bodies in Manitoba. Members of the Provincial elite belonged almost uniformly to one of these churches while the clergy were prominent members of society with considerable social and political influence. Certainly the regional bodies which governed these churches

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Taché on the Manitoba School Question, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967); and G. L. Comeault, "The Politics of the Manitoba School Question and Its Impact on L. P. A. Langevin's Relations with Manitoba's Catholic Minority Groups, 1895-1915," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1977). More general works are: W. L. Morton, "Manitoba Schools and Canadian Nationality, 1890-1923, Canadian Historical Society, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Society, June 6-8, 1951; W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957); L. C. Clark, The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights, (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1968); and J. T. Saywell (ed.), The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen 1893-1898, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960).

<sup>4</sup> At least one historiographic article has called for more research in this particular area. Hartwell Bowsfield, "The Prairie Provinces," in J. L. Granatstein and Paul Stevens, (eds.), A Readers Guide to Canadian History, Vol 2: Confederation to the Present (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 208.

were heavily weighted toward the middle class members of the church. The debates within these bodies were often concerned with social issues and studies of the Synod, Presbytery, District and Conference reports are frequently useful sources of information on contemporary Manitoba thought. The concern of this thesis will be the three largest of these churches, the Prebyterian Church, the Methodist Church and the Church of England, all of which had long relationships with public education in Manitoba. In 1891 these three churches collectively claimed 98,290 adherents which constituted 64 percent of the population of Manitoba at the time.<sup>5</sup> Quite clearly, an appreciation of the attitudes and actions of these churches and their representatives towards education will contribute to our understanding of the causes of the school question.

In the existing literature, historians have tended to treat these Anglo-Protestant churches as an homogeneous body and have failed to explore the individual differences among them. In order to challenge this position, the present thesis will trace the policies of these churches towards education from their earliest schools in the Red River Colony or Manitoba to the Laurier-Greenway Compromise. The body of the thesis will consist of four chapters. The first chapter will give an historical and historiographic background to the Manitoba School Question. The next three chapters will consecutively study; the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist

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<sup>5</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of 1891.

Church and the Church of England. Although it would seem natural to place the Church of England first because of its longer history in the region, the Anglicans will be studied third since there are issues that need to be raised in the Prebyterian and Methodist chapters before they can be adequately discussed in the Church of England chapter.

## Chapter II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Just as in the rest of early Canada, religion and education had always been closely intertwined both in the Red River Colony and later in the Province of Manitoba. In the Colony, due to the absence of any government or social agency responsible for education, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, and to a lesser extent, the Presbyterian Church, fulfilled one of their traditional mandates by providing schools for the children of their parishioners. This burden was somewhat relieved when the transfer of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company to Canada and the ensuing crisis led to the creation of the Province of Manitoba and the establishment of a government whose responsibilities included education. However, differing traditions towards education as well as unique cultural considerations meant that one system of schools was not practicable in the new Province. In order to preserve the cultural and religious duality a clause was inserted into the Manitoba Act, the Constitution of the new Province, which guaranteed that existing rights and practices towards education in Red River would continue in Manitoba.

In 1871 the Provincial Government fulfilled both its responsibility to provide an educational system and to protect existing rights by creating what became known as the dual school system, a public school system based on the model in use in the Province of Quebec. This school system had a central board divided into two essentially autonomous units, one administered by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the other by representatives of the Protestant Churches collectively. Each of the two sections of the board had control over half of the twenty-four school districts in the Province and each was empowered to set curriculum, certify teachers, distribute provincial grants and decide upon any matter which had to do with religious instruction.<sup>6</sup>

The dual school system worked well. It allowed two very different educational traditions to operate within one public education system. The Roman Catholic Church believed that secular education should not be separated from religion while the Presbyterians and Anglicans tended to treat religion as a very important but separate part of the instruction. Separation of the schools also allowed the Roman Catholic students to study in French, and thus the schools assisted the Church as an important buttress of the minority community in the face of a growing, and potentially menac-

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<sup>6</sup> S. E. Lang, "History of Education in Manitoba," reprinted in The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights, L. C. Clark (ed.), (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1968), p. 15.

ing, majority culture.

After 1871 the two systems went in different directions. The Roman Catholic system retained its distinctive religious flavour, while the Protestant section became increasingly secular. As the population of the Province swelled with the influx of Ontario settlers, the Protestant schools grew to resemble the Ontario public school system.<sup>7</sup> This change reflected the social and political changes which gradually transformed the institutions of Manitoba between 1870 and 1890. Despite these changes there was only one serious challenge to the dual school system during the twenty years of its existence, and this challenge failed as it led only to revisions in the functioning of the system rather than to its governing philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

In 1889, the issue of abolishing the dual school system was again raised, this time successfully. The resulting conflict between the defenders of Roman Catholic rights to publicly supported denominational schools on the one hand and the Provincial Government and advocates of non-sectarian national schools on the other raged until it was settled, for the moment, in 1896. Popularly known as the Manitoba School Question, the debate was not confined simply to Mani-

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<sup>7</sup> See T. S. Mitchell, "In the Image of Ontario: Public Schools in Brandon, 1881-1890," Manitoba History, No. 12, 1986, pp. 25-34 for an illustration of the changes in one city in the Province.

<sup>8</sup> R. E. Clague, "The Political Aspects of the Manitoba School Question," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1939), pp. 86-112.

toba but polarized the entire country.

The origins of the school question have become the subject of historical controversy. The traditional view has held that the Protestant majority in Manitoba was not critical of the dual school system prior to 1889.<sup>9</sup> Traditionalists have argued that the issue was a result of anti-French and Roman Catholic agitation brought from Ontario by D'Alton McCarthy. McCarthy, a Federal politician and spokesman for the Equal Rights Association, delivered a lecture to an enthusiastic crowd in Portage La Prairie on August 5, 1889. He encouraged his audience to support an attack on the rights of the French Roman Catholic minority in response to the passage of the Jesuit Estates act in Quebec.<sup>10</sup> Also on the platform was Joseph Martin the Attorney-General of Mani-

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<sup>9</sup> The main proponents of this view are J. W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1939), pp. 36-43; Clague, pp. 133-150; Clark, pp. 4-5; and W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), pp. 240-248. It should be noted, as Clark has done, that Morton hedged his comments on the external origins of the issue by stating that the Manitoba electorate was ripe for the issue. See Clark, p. 4 for his comments on Morton. Crunican, although his study did not deal with the origins of the issue, seemed to be reluctant to abandon McCarthy as the cause of the problem, P. E. Crunican, Priests and Politicians: Manitoba Schools and the Election of 1876, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 7-11.

<sup>10</sup> The Jesuit Estates Act was an act of the Quebec Legislation which extended compensation to the Jesuits for land previously confiscated and which appealed to the Pope to adjudicate disputes. The Act aroused indignation in Protestant Ontario and the Equal Rights Association was formed to attempt to have the Federal Government disallow it. Protestant extremists, such as McCarthy, painted the Act as a violation of Canadian sovereignty and an illustration of the danger of permitting the existence of a minority culture.

toba who spoke immediately after McCarthy, pledging the Greenway Government to the abolition of both the official status of French and of the dual school system. He further promised that the Province's schools would be replaced by a system of purely secular national schools. This traditional perspective on the origins of the school question suggested that the Government of Premier Thomas Greenway seized upon the public sentiment aroused by McCarthy in order to bolster their electoral support which had been damaged by a scandal over the Northern Pacific Railway. Proponents of this view have taken the position that the Manitoba School Question descended upon the Province "out of a clear blue sky,"<sup>11</sup> with no previous warning or consideration and was thus the result of the national French-English struggle which was translated into a local problem as the result of outside agitators.

More recent works have placed a greater emphasis on the local origins of the issue. J. R. Miller has suggested that McCarthy's role has been exaggerated.<sup>12</sup> He argued that the thrust of McCarthy's speech at Portage La Prairie was the abolition of official status of the French language and barely touched upon the school issue. Miller has contended that far from being out of a clear blue sky, English-speaking Manitobans had been grumbling about the schools for

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<sup>11</sup> Dafoe, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> J. R. Miller, "D'Alton McCarthy, Equal Rights and the Origins of the Manitoba School Question," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIV, No. 4, 1973, pp. 369-392.

quite some time. Building on Miller, J. A. Hilts has suggested that the decision to abolish the old school system had already been made by the time of McCarthy's speech on August 5, 1889.<sup>13</sup> The Premier, Thomas Greenway, and the Minister of Public Works, Thomas Smart, had determined that the dual school system was too expensive and inefficient and they were committed to abolishing this system even prior to McCarthy's agitation. This interpretation has been revised by the work of D. J. Hall. He disagreed that the Cabinet had planned to abolish the Catholic schools but he believed rather that Smart and Greenway simply intended to implement a new system which placed Roman Catholic schools under much stricter control. Hall placed the blame for triggering the school issue on the Attorney General, Joseph Martin, who exceeded the decision of Cabinet in his speech following that of McCarthy's, when he committed the Government to a more radical course than had been discussed.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the cause, these authors have presented the Manitoba School Question as resulting from local issues.

Whatever the origins of the controversy, the Manitoba Government made a concerted attack on the rights of the French and Roman Catholic minority in 1890, abolishing the official status of French in the Province and passing the

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<sup>13</sup> J. A. Hilts, "The Political Career of Thomas Greenway," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1974), pp. 196-221.

<sup>14</sup> D. J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: Vol. I The Young Napoleon, 1861-1900, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981), pp. 39-45.

Manitoba Public School Act which replaced the dual school system with an English only, essentially secular school system. The two parts of the Board of Education were merged into one Advisory Board and religion was abandoned as the principal concern in selecting members of the Board.<sup>15</sup> Manitoba Roman Catholics were infuriated at this infringement of their constitutional rights but were forced by limited resources to select only one issue to attempt redress. They chose the school issue as the more important. The challenge of the Church was undertaken by its Archbishop, Alexandre Taché and his astute legal counsel, the Presbyterian J. S. Ewart.

Archbishop Taché was the dominant figure in his Church in western Canada from his appointment as Bishop of St. Boniface in 1853 until his death in 1894. An excellent conciliator as well as an administrator, he was able to bridge the often deep divisions between the Irish and French Roman Catholics under his charge and thus the Church was able to present a unified front in demanding redress for their grievance. Taché enjoyed a good relationship with the non-Catholic population of the Province, with the result that he received somewhat better treatment at the hands of the press during the school question than did his successor, L. P. A. Langevin.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Lang, p. 17. See pp. 46-47 of this thesis for more detail.

<sup>16</sup> Crunican, p. 12

The Manitoba School Question was not the first issue that Taché had to deal with nor perhaps was it the most difficult (that distinction may be reserved for the first Riel crisis). It was, however, perhaps the most significant since the national schools were a betrayal of everything Taché had accomplished for minority rights in his many years of work in Red River and Manitoba. The new schools not only ran counter to the spirit, if not the letter of the Manitoba Act which Taché had helped to negotiate, but also were an abdication of pre-election promises by Greenway that Roman Catholic rights would be protected by his Government.

Taché charged that the national schools were not a non-denominational public system but a continuation of the Protestant schools of the dual system without the Roman Catholic schools. He pointed to the religious exercises, the composition of the Advisory Board and the fact that only the Protestant school inspectors had been retained by the new system to support his view that only the Roman Catholics had been forced to make significant changes and endure hardships.

The two systems are the same as far as Protestants are concerned, but the result of the introduction of the new schools has been detrimental to Catholics. The old regime had consideration for all religious beliefs and placed the citizens on the same equal footing with regard to their religious convictions; the new regime on the contrary, while hiding under false names, pretends to offer the same advantages to all, but creates an essential distinction. Some may conscientiously avail themselves of the same, and suffer by the practical

conclusion to which they are condemned.<sup>17</sup>

In an attempt to restore the balance, Taché and Ewart appealed for redress to the Conservative Government in Ottawa but were given more sympathy than direct action. Supported by the public opinion of Roman Catholics in Manitoba and Quebec, they launched a legal challenge to the constitutionality of the Act through the case of Barrett v. Winnipeg. The Greenway Government, delighted with the issue, found their policy to be extremely popular not only among the English-speaking majority in Manitoba but also in Protestant Ontario. Martin's successor as Attorney-General, Clifford Sifton, was charged with protecting the new School Act in the courts. Sifton, through legal chicanery, some of which will be described in the fifth chapter, won the case when the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the highest court in the Empire, declared the Act to be within the Constitutional powers of the Province.

Thwarted in their quest for redress through the courts, the Roman Catholics again turned to the Federal Government. Caught between strongly held opposing opinions in Ontario and Quebec, the Conservative Government of Prime Minister J. S. D. Thompson, a Roman Catholic, reluctantly took a stand. It first referred to the courts through the Brophy case the issue of whether or not the minority had a grievance and if

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<sup>17</sup> Archbishop A. A. Taché, "Are the Public Schools of Manitoba the Continuation of the Protestant Schools of the Same Province," reprinted in Clark, pp. 67-75; pp. 73-74.

the Federal Government had the power to intervene. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ruled yes to both questions. With no way to equivocate any longer, the Government now, ironically, under the leadership of a former Grand Master of the Orange Lodge, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, prepared to introduce remedial legislation to impose a settlement on Manitoba. Political tension in the country, already high, rose sharply pushing aside other political issues. Pro-remedialists and anti-remedialists threatened the Federal Government with dire consequences, each claiming that their side alone possessed the moral high ground. In 1896, before the legislation could be passed, the mandate of the Government, now under the leadership of Sir Charles Tupper, expired forcing an election and leaving the remedial legislation to be decided by the electorate.

The Liberal Party, under Wilfrid Laurier, won the election on a platform of provincial rights and a negotiated solution to the Manitoba School Question, although curiously, the Conservatives took most of the seats in Manitoba. Accordingly, the new Government entered into talks with the Greenway Government and, in November of that year, the negotiators produced the Laurier-Greenway Compromise. The Compromise amended the Manitoba School Act such that the national school system was kept intact but three significant concessions were allowed.<sup>18</sup> Religious instruction by a cler-

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<sup>18</sup> O. D. Skelton, "The 'Sunny Ways' in Operation: The Laurier-Greenway Compromise," reprinted in Clark, pp. 212-213.

gyman of specific denominations (or persons designated by him) was allowed between 3:30 and 4:00 on a school day where numbers warranted and parents so desired. Second, at least one duly certified Roman Catholic had to be hired in urban schools of forty or more pupils or rural schools with twenty-five or more students, although in both cases the parents had to petition for the privilege. Finally, instruction in languages other than English was permitted where numbers warranted.

The Laurier-Greenway Compromise temporarily brought an end to the school question. Although Manitoba Roman Catholics were not satisfied with the solution, the rest of the country was happy to let the issue drop after seven years of continuous argument. The minority continued to struggle against the school system but to no avail. In 1916, a new Provincial Liberal Government acted again and even the concessions of the Laurier-Greenway Compromise were removed, exacerbating a long standing grievance which has never been completely redressed.

Within the context of the school question some historians have very briefly touched upon the thoughts of some of the leading Protestant clergymen in Manitoba. R. E. Clague attributed much of the agitation against the schools in the 1870's to the aggressive leadership of Reverend George Bryce and others in the Presbyterian Church.<sup>19</sup> However, Clague has

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<sup>19</sup> Clague, pp. 86-112.

little to say about the Protestants in subsequent events associated with the school question. E. G. Cooke, in her study of the Federal election of 1896, dismissed the importance of the Protestant Churches to the election.<sup>20</sup> She suggested that the Churches were so bound to traditional political stances, Liberal for the Presbyterians and Conservative for the Methodists and Anglicans, that they were unable to have any great influence on any particular issue. Cooke went further and argued with tantalizing brevity that the Presbyterians held themselves aloof from the school question and did so since they felt that they could not criticize any church for accepting Government funds for educational purposes since they did so for their native industrial schools. Finally, Cooke made the equally interesting observation, again without expansion, that the Church of England was resolutely opposed to the national school system.

Works which have dealt with entire denominations have been rare and incomplete. Clague and Morton dealt with the anger of the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church towards the intention of the Government, in 1889, to introduce completely secular schools.<sup>21</sup> These works have credited the two churches with arousing enough public sentiment to change the Government's position so that at least religious exercises were allowed in the schools. L. C. Clark has

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<sup>20</sup> E. G. Cooke, "The Federal Election of 1896 in Manitoba," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1943), pp. 46-49.

<sup>21</sup> Clague, p. 96 and Morton, Manitoba: A History, p. 246.

charged that these militant Protestants were hypocritical, trying to preserve religious instruction for their own children while aggressively challenging similar rights for Roman Catholics.<sup>22</sup> Clark also suggested, without elaboration, that the majority of Protestants may have not have been concerned about preserving religious instruction and were really only thinly disguised secularists.<sup>23</sup>

Works dealing with individual clergy are somewhat more prevalent. Several authors have suggested that Archbishop Machray of the Church of England was opposed to the new school system from its inception.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, J. R. Miller has noted that Reverend J. J. Roy, another Church of England clergyman, was instrumental in raising support for the new schools.<sup>25</sup> This would seem to suggest that considerable debate was engendered in at least one denomination. C. L. Macdonald has briefly described George Bryce's support for national schools as well as his activities during the negotiation of the Laurier-Greenway Compromise.<sup>26</sup> Finally,

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<sup>22</sup> Clark, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Morton, Manitoba: A History, P. 246; Clague, p. 96; R. A. Machray, Life of Archbishop Machray, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1909) notes that Machray remained dissatisfied until his death. W. T. Shaw, "The Role of J. S. Ewart in the Manitoba School Question," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1959), pp. 205-225 discusses the actions of the Government in manipulating Machray during the Logan v. Winnipeg case.

<sup>25</sup> Miller, p. 384.

<sup>26</sup> C. L. Macdonald, "George Bryce: Manitoba Scientist,

Clark reprinted excerpts from pamphlets and sermons done by Machray and several of the Presbyterian clergy.<sup>27</sup> Although useful as a resource for further research, these documents were too few for Clark to do more than speculate beyond a few broad conclusions, a limitation he himself acknowledged.<sup>28</sup>

Reading the literature on the school question, particularly that relating to the Anglo-Protestant churches, leaves a great many important questions unanswered. Exactly what were the policies of these three churches towards education, how did they change between 1870 and 1889 and what precipitated any such change? Did the clergy of those churches resent their reduction of direct influence over education in 1890 and if not, why not? What divisions of opinion were there within these churches? What was the influence of the clergy of these churches over majority opinion in Manitoba? In order to answer these questions this thesis will examine the policies of the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church and the Church of England towards education. Majority and dissenting opinion will be identified in each church and an attempt will be made to ascertain the social and/or theological factors which affected those attitudes. Finally, at the end of the thesis, the conclusions will attempt

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Churchman and Historian 1844-1931," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1983), pp. 15-18.

<sup>27</sup> Clark, pp. 39, 43-54, 62-67.

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

to answer some of the questions posed here.

### Chapter III

#### THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Presbyterian Church in the Red River Colony developed in virtual isolation from external Presbyterian influences. When the Selkirk settlers arrived in the new Colony in 1812 it was with the express promise that they would be supplied with a minister of their own denomination. This promise proved to be unfounded, primarily because of the lack of interest on the part of Canadian and Scottish Presbyterians. Compounded by the physical isolation of the Colony, this forced Red River Presbyterians to rely on their own resources and the often dubious ministrations of the Church of England. Not until 1851 did the first Presbyterian clergyman, the Reverend John Black, arrive. Although Black and the few other ministers assigned in the 1860's did provide some point of contact with the outside Church, continuous relations did not develop until after Confederation and the Colony was only intermittently exposed to outside Presbyterian influences.

The result of this was that Red River Presbyterians were insulated from the tumultuous theological-social changes and splintering that characterized the Presbyterian Church of the early to mid-nineteenth century. Prior to Confedera-

tion, the Red River Presbyterians continued to practice a form of traditional Presbyterianism centred on hearth and home with a very strong connection between their secular and spiritual lives. While Presbyterians elsewhere were redefining the world in order to adapt to urbanization and industrialization, the Kildonan settlers continued to view the world in a rural, agrarian context.

One of the principal concerns of the Red River Presbyterians was the establishment of their own school. Presbyterianism had long placed a strong emphasis on literacy not only for its secular advantages but also because it allowed the individual direct access to the Bible.<sup>29</sup> Although the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England established schools in 1818 and 1821 respectively, it was not until 1849 that the Presbyterians did so. Unlike the other two Churches, they had no outside source of funding and had no clergy of their own denomination. More importantly, the existence of Church of England schools provided a substitute, however inadequate, which lessened the necessity for their own school. However, growing conflict between the Presbyterians and the Church of England, combined with the lack of responsiveness of the Anglican schools to Presbyterian needs, made

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<sup>29</sup> C. L. Macdonald, "George Bryce, Manitoba Scientist, Churchman and Historian, 1844-1931," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1983), p. 84; see also T. Wigney, "Manifest Righteousness: The Presbyterian Church, Education and Nation Building in Canada, 1875-1914," in Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity, A. Chaiton and N. McDonald (eds.) (Toronto, Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1977), pp. 90-91.

the creation of a Presbyterian school inevitable.

The school that was established in 1849 was built at Kildonan and modeled along the lines of the Church of Scotland parish schools in Scotland.<sup>30</sup> It was run by a set of elected trustees and supported, apart from a £15 grant from the Council of Assiniboia in 1852, entirely by fees paid by the parents.<sup>31</sup> Apart from secular subjects, there were scripture readings and lessons on the tenets of the Presbyterian Church. Thus, the Kildonan school was a true denominational school in that it combined sectarian religious instruction with secular teaching for the children of a particular religious denomination.

While the Presbyterians did establish their own denominational school, they did not view it as upsetting the existing French-English, Roman Catholic-Protestant balance in the Colony. Whether they were simply acknowledging existing political reality or because there was a sense of toleration and appreciation for the existing structure of the community, the Presbyterians accepted an equitable division of resources. This is illustrated by a petition which they sent to the Council of Assiniboia in 1851 requesting a grant

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<sup>30</sup> G. Bryce, John Black: The Apostle of the Red River, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> J. C. Walker, "The Early History of the Presbyterian Church in Western Canada From the Earliest Times to the Year 1889," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1928), p. 59. K. Wilson, "The Development of Education in Manitoba," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Michigan State University, 1967), p. 61.

for their school:

That, as the improvement of education seems to be more requisite, at least among the Protestants of the settlement, than its mere extension, your petitioners pray, that their minister may receive, from the public fund, a sum proportioned to the fifty pounds, as aforesaid, granted to the Church of England, without prejudice, however, to the recognized equality in the premises between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics.<sup>32</sup>

The arrival of the Reverend John Black in the Colony in 1851 greatly enhanced the Kildonan school. Born in Scotland, Black came to Canada after living a short time in the United States. Educated in the first class at Knox College, he was sent to Red River by the Presbyterian Free Church of Canada. He proved to be an excellent choice for the position and became perhaps the most heroic figure in the history of western Canadian Presbyterianism. Black had an appreciation for the quiet traditional rural lifestyle of his new parishioners. A conciliatory Black worked effectively to reduce tensions between his Church and the Church of England. His efforts, both within and without the Presbyterian community, earned him the oft quoted title of the "apostle of Red River."

Prior to Black's arrival the Kildonan school suffered from poor leadership. The trustees elected by the parishioners did their best to administer the school but their limited experience and education made them unsuited for the task. Not only did Black provide leadership and guidance to the

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<sup>32</sup> Walker, p. 59.

school he also gave special tutoring to the more advanced students and arranged for textbooks and supplies to be brought from Canada. This connection between Black and the school decreased the influence of the trustees and made the school even more an element of the Church.

Despite the effective working of the parish schools, the Presbyterians quietly acquiesced in their absorption into the Protestant section of the dual School Board created when Manitoba entered Confederation. This may seem incongruous given that the new system put Presbyterians and Anglicans into the same schools, something which had prompted the creation of the Kildonan school twenty-two years earlier. In reality the new system made good sense to the Presbyterians. The new schools were to be funded by Provincial grant rather than by fees paid by parents, thus spreading the cost of the schools across a much wider base than before. The greater number of Church of England schools meant that Presbyterian parents had a wider geographical area in which to live while still having access to schools. The new schools did not have the same problems as had existed when Presbyterians had been forced to use Anglican schools. Presbyterians were given considerable influence in the running of the new schools and were thus not at the mercy of decision makers of another denomination. Perhaps the most important issue, that of religious instruction, was to be a collective responsibility of the Protestant clergy meaning that Pre-

byterian students would only be taught such tenets as the Protestants held in common and not Church of England doctrine. The fact that the new Protestant section of the School Board did not implement any program of religious instruction would not have caused great concern as the absence was easily explained as temporary due to the difficulty in coming to an agreement among denominations. In short, as George Bryce pointed out:

Those, who in the old Red River Settlement days had been accustomed to their parish schools, were not seriously opposed to the separate school [sic] system. To them it seemed simply a more systematic way of working their parish schools, and receiving the assistance of a government grant.<sup>33</sup>

The entry of Manitoba into Confederation also prompted the evolution of the Presbyterian Church in the Province. The Presbytery of Manitoba was created, altering the status of Manitoba from a missionary endeavour to one of a self-governing Presbytery under the auspices of the Canada Presbyterian Church.<sup>34</sup> The increase in settlement from Ontario meant steady growth until, by 1891 it was the largest single denomination in the Province.<sup>35</sup> This rapid growth ended the isolation of the Church from Ontario and a growing supply of clergy and funds became available. With these changes came exposure to, and subsequent acceptance of, the new ideas and attitudes that had developed during the previous twenty

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<sup>33</sup> Bryce, p. 140.

<sup>34</sup> Walker, p. 91.

<sup>35</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of 1891.

years in the Ontario Church. This would play a significant role in reshaping Manitoba Presbyterian attitudes towards the dual school system.

The Presbytery of Manitoba was part of the Canada Presbyterian Church which had been formed in 1861 through an amalgamation of the Free Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (Free Church) and the United Presbyterian Church of Canada. In many ways this Church was very different from the Free Church that had sent John Black to Red River in 1851. Policies and attitudes that would have horrified the earlier Presbyterians were now accepted with equanimity. For example, the issue of separation of Church and State (volunteerism) which the Free Church had specifically rejected in 1851, was rapidly becoming an accepted tenet in the Canada Presbyterian. The Church had developed a greater distance between secular and spiritual aspects of life with an increased emphasis on the social agenda dictated by the middle class attitudes of clergy and laity rather than on the traditional teachings of the Church.<sup>36</sup> Presbyterians were ardent expansionists, assuming that God wanted Canada to pursue aggressively development as a British and Protestant country since British Protestant Canadians were a "peculiar peoplehood" with a special responsibility to act

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<sup>36</sup> N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," Studies in Religion, Vol. II, No. 4, 1973, pp. 315-326; see also W. E. Devilliers-Westfall, "The Dominion of the Lord: An Introduction to the Cultural History of Protestant Ontario in the Victorian Period," Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LXXXIII, No. 1, 1976, pp. 47-70.

as a moral example to the rest of the world.<sup>37</sup> In common with other Protestants, their vision of Canada became God's vision of Canada.

Prominent among these new attitudes was a rejection of the traditional Presbyterian perspective on education as a function of the Church. The new Presbyterians believed that their Church and the schools each had a role to play in developing the west, but that these roles were distinct and separate.<sup>38</sup> The Church was vital to the development of a moral society both in the religious and social sense. The schools were to contribute that same ideal but also act as an unifying factor in society, absorbing minorities and giving the young of the new Province a common sense of identity and purpose. In order to do this it was believed that education needed to be removed from the control of the Churches and the schools secularized. The loss of religion in the schools, it was argued, was not a danger since the provision of distinctive religious instruction or any religious instruction was the responsibility of home and Church. If the Churches failed to agree on a program of religious instruction then religious exercises, or no religion at all,

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<sup>37</sup> Wigney, p. 89; for a discussion of the political and social attitudes of one of the most prominent of the incoming expansionist Presbyterians, George Bryce, see C. L. Macdonald; see also D. O'ram Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 199-215.

<sup>38</sup> N. McDonald, "Canadian Nationalism and North West Schools, 1884-1905," in Chaiton and McDonald, p. 78; see also Presbyterian Witness, March 4, 1876.

was sufficient.

That these schools reflected the ones that the incoming clergy and settlers had left behind in Ontario is not surprising. The Ontario public school system, developed by Reverend Egerton Ryerson in the 1840's and 1850's, grew up specifically to meet the needs of the Ontario middle class when their private schools proved too expensive to maintain.<sup>39</sup> These schools were relatively cheap, efficient and had a curriculum aimed at the needs of the middle class. These were the schools that the advocates of change in the Manitoba system had grown up with and were confident were the best since they fitted their specific needs. The concerns of others who operated from a different model of education were dismissed as either archaic or as a danger to the needs of the community as in the case of the Roman Catholics.

The rejection of both duality and state support for the Church in areas like public education caused the new ministers and future leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Manitoba to come into conflict with the older members, most notably Black. Black, comfortable with the existing society, resented the changes proposed by ardent expansionists such as Reverend George Bryce and Reverend James Robertson. Bryce illustrated the differences between the old and new

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<sup>39</sup> R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, "From Volunteerism to State Schooling: The Creation of the Public School System in Ontario," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXVI, No. 4, 1985, pp. 443-473.

attitudes in a report of a conversation he had once had with Black:

Shortly after the transfer the writer [Bryce] remembers Mr. Black when speaking of the disturbed and clamorous times through which we were passing, sighing for "the peaceful days of the old Red River." Oh! but responded the writer, in his youthful Canadian enthusiasm, "Surely you would not have the broad acres of Red River locked up from cultivation! Life is hardly worth living without progress!" "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle in Cathay." "Well, perhaps so," said Mr. Black, "but there are animals that like to lie at the bottom of the pool and bask in the peace and quiet."<sup>40</sup>

Since financing for the Church came mostly from Ontario, power quickly began to shift towards the new leaders. In 1871, shortly after his arrival, Bryce won an early battle of wills with Black when the Canada Presbyterian Church supported his position to move Manitoba College from Kildonan to Winnipeg.<sup>41</sup> Black, depressed by the ongoing changes in Manitoban society, repeatedly considered leaving the Province. In a letter to his brother in 1875, he wrote:

As to congregational matters they are by no means satisfactory what with personal and family aspirations, political factions and general worldliness, the preaching of the gospel seems like the blowing of the idle wind. I do not know what to think about it. If it should please God to open for me another door and send someone here fitted to harmonize warring elements, I should feel it a great relief. What hope would there be of a comfortable settlement in Ontario?<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Bryce, pp. 105-106.

<sup>41</sup> Bryce, pp. 135-136.

<sup>42</sup> United Church Archives (UCA), Conference of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario (Winnipeg), Reverend John Black Papers, Black to Reverend James Black, October 4, 1875.

The idea of leaving, appealing though it may have been, was never carried to fruition and Black remained in Manitoba until his death.

Expansionists, both Presbyterian and others, did not directly confront the dual school system until 1875. In that year, W. F. Luxton, through editorials in the Manitoba Free Press and from his seat in the Legislature, began to advocate a completely secular school system, arguing that the dual system was inefficient. He quickly began to receive support from George Bryce, who challenged the existing school system in a series of letters to the Free Press.<sup>43</sup> Bryce relied on arguments of social utility rather than on scripture, theology or even Church tradition to support his call for abolition of the dual school system. Far from unusual, this secular outlook would be true of virtually all of the Protestant opponents of denominational schools. Bryce charged the school system with being a divisive force

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<sup>43</sup> Although R. E. Clague has argued that Luxton was acting from an appreciation of a broadly based secular school system while Bryce was motivated by sheer anti-Catholicism, there is little evidence to support his contention. Both Luxton and Bryce argued that the school system was inefficient and should be replaced with one on the Ontario model. See Manitoba Free Press, September 10, 1874. Both rejected French language rights in the Province and both argued that the minority should set aside its rights. See Manitoba Free Press, September 21 and October 10, 1874. The motivations of both Luxton and Bryce were far more complex than simply unreasoning anti-Catholicism. Clague's argument probably stemmed from a need to deal with a reversal of Luxton's position in 1889 rather than from careful comparison. See R. E. Clague, "The Political Aspects of the Manitoba School Question," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1939), pp. 86-107.

for the future of Manitoba. More immediately, he called the dual school system unfair and anti-democratic with its emphasis on religion as the determining factor in selecting members of the School Board. He demanded that the dual School Board be replaced by a single elected Board and made representative of the community as a whole. In one of his letters Bryce wrote:

A new system is needed because the vice of the old system was [sic] its non-representative character. Some of your correspondents have amusing ideas as to the meaning of representatives, eight clergymen, two editors, two doctors and two farmers are spoken of as making a representative body of fourteen. Well either there is an immense body of clergy in the Province; or a clergyman must have an infinitesimally small weight that eight clergymen should represent their class, and six laymen the rest of the Province. As a clergyman I do not feel flattered.<sup>44</sup>

The adoption of this position would have changed the philosophy of the school system completely and would have gone against the educational traditions of both Protestant and Roman Catholic Red River. More importantly, as Bryce was well aware, it would have left the Roman Catholic schools at the mercy of the growing Protestant majority.

One of the arenas that Bryce used to attack the dual school system was within the Presbytery of Manitoba itself. On December 8, 1875 Bryce read a paper to the Presbytery "directing attention to imperfections in the Public School Systems of the Province and suggesting certain changes."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Manitoba Free Press, April, 26, 1875.

<sup>45</sup> UCA, (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Presbytery of Manitoba,

The Presbytery referred the issue to a newly created Education Committee for future study and recommendations. The Committee consisted of Bryce, Black, Reverend James Robertson, Professor Thomas Hart and two lay people. The Committee, apparently deadlocked between new and old attitudes, never managed to reach a conclusion on the school issue, and announced on March 8, 1876 that it was not prepared yet to present a report.<sup>46</sup> Unable to come to a satisfactory agreement, the Committee simply disappeared without mention after 1876.

In response to the pressure exerted by both Bryce and Luxton for abolition, the Manitoba Legislature modified the School Board somewhat, removing the equal Protestant-Catholic balance and replacing it with a fixed number of twelve Protestant and nine Roman Catholic members. In addition, they changed the apportionment of the school grant. Previously money had been distributed on the basis of total attendance. Under the new system, money was divided "in proportion to the number of children between the ages of five and twelve as enumerated by the trustees in the several districts, a certain fixed amount being given to each school board and the remainder in proportion to the attendance of pupils."<sup>47</sup>

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December 8, 1875.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, March 8, 1876.

<sup>47</sup> Clague, p. 95.

While the Government implied that these changes were made to appease the Ontario group, they did little to affect the dual nature of the school system. The shift in composition of the Board and in funding did not change the ability of the separate sections to make crucial decisions over curriculum, textbooks, and teacher selection. In short, these changes reflected an acknowledgment of the demographic changes in the Province rather than any lessening of the rights of the minority.

The Government's attempt to appease the agitators failed and in 1877 the opponents of the school system launched another attack, this time within the Protestant section of the Board of Education. James Robertson introduced a draft of a bill to the Board which was to be sent to the Legislature. This proposed bill would have replaced the dual board with a single one, established a non-sectarian school system and made the use of English textbooks compulsory.<sup>48</sup> The debates over this motion clearly revealed the Presbyterian division on the issue. Both Robertson and Black were representatives on the Protestant section of the Board of Education. Robertson argued vehemently that the existing school system was impractical and inefficient.<sup>49</sup> He also took the stance that religious instruction had no place in the public schools and was better left to representatives of the Church. Black argued that the proponents of the motion were

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<sup>48</sup> Manitoba Free Press, January 20, 1877.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

trying to create disharmony in the Province and he accused them of "picking at the Roman Catholics."<sup>50</sup> Black further contended that the rights of the minority should be respected not only in the case of the Roman Catholics but in the case of any group that was sufficiently large.

The motion was blocked for two reasons. First, the proponents of the motion were unsure of their constitutional position.<sup>51</sup> Second, Black in defense of the dual school system had the support of Bishop Machray of the Church of England. The influence of these two men was such that it was unlikely that any such change could have been achieved without their support.<sup>52</sup> Certainly, Robertson blamed the Machray-Black coalition for the motion's defeat. Twelve years later, in 1889, in a letter discussing education, he accused Machray and Black of perpetuating the "present precarious system."<sup>53</sup> Robertson believed that both of these men had played into the hands of Archbishop Taché

The Presbyterian Church in Manitoba continued to change in the years between 1877 and 1889. The increase in Presbyterian population in the West brought about the creation of the Synod of Manitoba and the North West in 1884, with an

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, February 3, 1877.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Clague, p. 96.

<sup>53</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Reverend A. B. Baird Papers, Robertson to Baird, December 30, 1889.

ever increasing number of Presbyteries under its auspices.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the most important change during this period was the death of the "apostle of Red River" giving a symbolic if not a real end to the philosophical conflict in the Church between Red River and Ontario. The loss of John Black in 1882 confirmed the position of men like Robertson and Bryce as the dominant forces in western Canadian Presbyterianism.

Despite this change there was virtually no criticism within the Church of the dual school system prior to 1889. This reflected the trend within the Province as a whole. Clague has argued that this indicated that the 1877 opponents of the schools had come to accept the dual school system.<sup>55</sup> In particular, he pointed to glowing mentions of the school system of the Province in Bryce's 1882 book, Manitoba: Its Infancy, Growth and Present Condition, and his 1887 pamphlet "The History and Condition of Education in Winnipeg."<sup>56</sup> Clague failed to explore factors other than an acceptance of the system which could explain this lack of opposition. First, as noted earlier the opponents of the existing system were unsure of their constitutional position

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<sup>54</sup> C. W. Gordon, The Life of James Robertson: Missionary Superintendent in the Northwest Territories, (Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908), pp. 228-229.

<sup>55</sup> Clague, pp. 110-112.

<sup>56</sup> Clague, p.111; G. Bryce, Manitoba: Its Infancy, Growth and Present Condition, (London, Sampson, Law, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1882), pp. 354-355; G. Bryce, "The History and Condition of Education in Winnipeg," 1885, Canadian Institute of Historical Microreproductions, No. 14425, p. 3.

in terms of abolishing the dual school system. Second, the Presbyterians' first priority was the overwhelming task of providing both missionaries to the native population and churches and clergy for the ever expanding settler population. Third, their energies were expended on making changes in the Province in areas where there was less resistance. In education, this meant continuing to press the change of the Protestant section of the School Board towards a Manitoba version of Ontario's system. This conflict, especially over religious instruction, again earned them the enmity of Bishop Machray.<sup>57</sup> Finally, western Canadian boosters such as George Bryce were not likely to draw attention to what they perceived as defects in the Province when writing in an attempt to encourage Ontario immigration to Manitoba. In short, the absence of a public challenge to the dual school system does not necessarily imply that the critics of 1877 had gained any respect for the rights of the minority in regards to education.

Certainly the attitudes and actions of the leaders of Manitoba Presbyterianism towards the School Question in 1889 reveal little change from 1877. The basic social premise of D'Alton McCarthy's speech at Portage La Prairie in 1889 was the same social philosophy which had motivated Bryce, Robertson and their supporters in the 1870's. They shared his vision of a British Canada based on Protestant ideals and hardly needed McCarthy to alert them of its worth. Nor did

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<sup>57</sup> See p. 110.

they need to be convinced that the rights of the minority in regards to education or language were things that stood in the way of the "proper" development of western Canada, the Dominion and, ultimately, the Empire. Thus, any group which maintained its distinctiveness could be considered a threat to God's dominion. That the minority culture was French and Roman Catholic, traditional enemies of Protestant Ontario, only made its existence worse. As far as the Presbyterians were concerned, McCarthy was preaching to the converted. Even if McCarthy's anti-Catholic sentiments had been new ones to Manitoba Presbyterians, there was a far more likely source for their transmission. Many prominent Ontario Presbyterians were also leaders of the Equal Rights Association and several of these men were in close contact with Manitoba Presbyterians. For example, Dr. William Caven, Principal of Knox College and President of the Equal Rights Association, was a close friend of Dr. J. M. King and other local clergy as well as T. W. Taylor, Chief Justice of Manitoba and prominent lay Presbyterian. Taylor's respect for Caven was so great that he named his second son after him.<sup>58</sup>

Before McCarthy's arrival, Manitoba Presbyterians had displayed their attitudes toward Roman Catholics in a motion on the Jesuit Estates Act. In May of 1889, the Synod of Manitoba and the North West had passed a resolution condemning the Quebec government for recognizing the Jesuits and

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<sup>58</sup> Public Archives of Canada (PAC), MG 30 E 484, Sir T. W. Taylor Papers, Taylor Diaries, Vol. II, p. 372, May 21, 1883.

for allowing the Pope to interfere in Canadian affairs. The Synod also recommended "all ministers and missionaries within the bound [of the Synod] to do all in their power to instruct and establish their people in Protestant principles, and to warn them of the subservience of politicians to the Church of Rome as led by the Society of Jesus."<sup>59</sup>

Although Presbyterians had little trouble with the social agenda espoused at Portage La Prairie, Joseph Martin's pledge of a secular school system in his speech forced the Church to deal with an issue for which it was not prepared. The role of religion in the public schools was an issue on which there was no clear consensus and indeed was one which threatened to divide Presbyterians.<sup>60</sup> Whatever the level of agreement in the Church on the value of national schools in terms of efficiency or as an assimilation tool, the clergy were divided over how much religion should be in the schools. Until this issue was resolved, they would be ineffectual advocates of the new school system.

Religious instruction in the schools had already been examined by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the national body of the Church. In 1887, the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto of the Church of England invited the General Assembly to express its opinion on

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<sup>59</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Presbytery of Winnipeg, May 15, 1889.

<sup>60</sup> G. Bryce, "Manitoba Items," The Presbyterian Record, March 1890.

religious instruction in primary schools. Reverend G. M. Grant and Thomas Macadam chaired the Presbyterian committee to develop policy on the matter. It reported at the next Assembly, in 1888, that the Presbyterian Church should reject both sectarian and purely secular schools.<sup>61</sup> It also rejected religious exercises, that is, simply the reading of the Bible or prayers, rather than non-doctrinal discussions of scripture. The General Assembly accepted the committee's recommendations and passed a resolution which read, in part:

The General Assembly while recognizing that the chief object of the State in regard to the education of the young is to secure full and liberal instruction in secular subjects, and that therefore the most part of the time of every school, aided directly or indirectly by the State, should be devoted to this object, holds that a grievous wrong is done when secular instruction is placed in such a position as to disparage Christianity, or leave the young unacquainted with the fundamental historical and moral teachings of God's Word.<sup>62</sup>

Despite this official position of the General Assembly, Manitoba Presbyterians were anything but united in supporting it. Three positions were forcefully and publicly advocated.<sup>63</sup> The first of these adhered loosely to the 1888 General Assembly resolution. Advocated by Reverend J. M. King, Principal of Manitoba College, and supported by Reverend Dr. Du Val, the best known exposition was in King's pamphlet

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<sup>61</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1888.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> G. Bryce, "Manitoba Items," The Presbyterian Record, January 1890.

"Education: Not Secular Nor Sectarian but Religious," taken from a lecture he delivered to the theological department of the College.<sup>64</sup> After rejecting the maintenance of the existing system as damaging to the unity of society, King attacked Martin's proposal for completely secular schools. King believed that it was impossible to divorce morality from Christianity, hence to remove all religion from the schools would be to remove the teaching of morality and would result in dire consequences for the Province:

"If the public school is to be the seed-plot of noble character, of generous virtues, and not simply of scholastic achievements, if it is to furnish society with good citizens, and not simply smart arithmeticians or possibly with apt criminals, there must be found in it not only methodical instruction and careful intellectual drill, but amid all else, as the occasion offers or requires, moral teaching and moral influence."<sup>65</sup>

King went on to say that if the schools did not provide religious teaching then children who did not get it at home or from the Church would get their morals only "from the street corner or saloon."<sup>66</sup> This stand by King caused him to be viewed with suspicion by supporters of national schools. As a result he was forced repeatedly to defend publicly his loyalty to the new system.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> J. M. King, "Education: Not Secular Nor Sectarian but Religious," and Dr. Duval sermon from November 25, 1889 both reprinted in, J. S. Ewart, The Manitoba School Question, (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company Limited, Publishers, 1894), pp. 179-205.

<sup>65</sup> King, p. 183.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 186.

<sup>67</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, October 8, 1896.

The second position rejected religious instruction but believed that religious exercises were necessary to assert the presence of God in the schools. Its chief proponent was George Bryce with support from Reverend R. G. MacBeth and others.<sup>68</sup> This system called for precisely the same amount of religion in the national schools as had been found in the Protestant schools. Each day was to be opened and closed with the reading of selected prayers and Bible passages without comment. Bryce felt that religious instruction in the schools was impractical and was better left to the Church and to parents. Schools were meant for the important task of providing a secular education and a unified country and should not be criticized for failing to provide training in Christianity. For Bryce, one could "as well object on conscientious grounds to agricultural exhibitions without a religious department, or a University Council without prayers or a concert without sacred numbers in it, as a good national school where no religious instruction is given."<sup>69</sup>

The third position agreed entirely with Joseph Martin that the only reasonable system of schools was one which was completely secular. Principal advocates of this position were James Robertson and Reverend Joseph Hogg.<sup>70</sup> Like Bryce

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<sup>68</sup> Bryce's views are in The Manitoba Sun, August 22, 1889 while MacBeth's views can be found in an editorial in UCA (Winnipeg), Manitoba College Journal, March 1890, Vol V, No. 5, pp. 78-79.

<sup>69</sup> The Manitoba Sun, August 22, 1889.

<sup>70</sup> Both views can be found in The Manitoba Sun, August 22, 1889.

they felt that the role of the schools as an agent of assimilation was too important to be interfered with by religious instruction. Unlike Bryce, they argued that Bible readings and prayer were potentially divisive factors and should be eliminated.

Robertson, in particular, abhorred King's position.<sup>71</sup> He had no faith in religious instruction in public schools, having himself been educated at a Church of Scotland parish school where "precious little Bible knowledge I got and of religion I got less."<sup>72</sup> Robertson felt that King's arguments for the State's duty to provide moral training in the schools blurred the line between Church and State. He asked "Why stop with education at 16? Why not provide religious instruction for the citizens and so make him [sic] moral and good and keep him so? The goal of Dr. King's logic seems to me to be a State Church."<sup>73</sup> Finally, Robertson feared that the similarity between the positions of King and Bishop Machray could lead to a re-creation of the Black-Machray alliance which had defeated him in 1877 and which could again prevent the introduction of national schools. Robertson's remarks reveal a far greater concern with the secular absorption of the French minority into English Manitoba society than their religious conversion to Protestantism.

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<sup>71</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Baird papers, Robertson to Baird, December 30, 1889.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

The issue raged until December 1889, when it was resolved quietly at a meeting of the Presbytery of Winnipeg.<sup>74</sup> In what was certainly a pre-arranged compromise, King presented a motion, seconded by Bryce, to endorse the national school system while calling for the use of prayers and scripture readings to "inculcate and enforce Christian morality."<sup>75</sup> During discussion, Bryce made it clear that the issue was in no way endorsing religious instruction, a point not disputed by King.<sup>76</sup> Robertson was not present but Hogg suggested the motion was acceptable, provided that the Roman Catholics were included in any body which determined the nature of religious exercises.<sup>77</sup>

This agreement demonstrated three important points about Manitoba Presbyterians. First it showed the depth of Presbyterian support for the concept of national schools. Despite the deep division amongst the clergy over religious instruction, they were willing to compromise in order to endorse the new system. The Church of England, confronted with a similar debate and with less divergence of opinion, remained polarized throughout the period of the school question and never took an official position on the national schools.<sup>78</sup> The Church of England's support for national

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<sup>74</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Presbytery of Winnipeg, December 10, 1889.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> The Manitoba Sun, December 11, 1889.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

schools was not great enough to overcome divisions resulting from other related issues. However, the Presbyterian Church's commitment to the principle of national schools was such that other issues, including religion, became secondary. Second, Hogg and Robertson's argument that Roman Catholics must be consulted before any religious instruction be implemented illustrates the attempt in the Church to preserve for themselves the illusion that the establishment of the national schools and the implicit eradication of minority culture was not unfair and thus advocating it was within the democratic tradition of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>79</sup> This illusion also reinforced the belief that any Roman Catholic challenge to the school system was a demand for special treatment and thus proponents of the national schools had a right to disregard the complaints as "Romish aggression." Third, the lack of lay participation in the argument set a pattern of quiet acquiescence on the part of the laity, at least within the context of the Church, that would endure throughout the school question.<sup>80</sup> However, rather than suggesting that the laity didn't care about the issue, it is

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<sup>78</sup> See p. 115-143.

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion of the importance of the liberal democratic tradition in education to the Presbyterians, see Wigney; see also E. A. Christie, "The Official Attitudes and Opinions of the Presbyterian Church in Canada with Respect to Public Affairs and Social Programs, 1875-1925," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1956) pp. 15-17, 22.

<sup>80</sup> It should be noted that J. S. Ewart did not participate in the discussions within the regional bodies of his Church.

more likely that their silence was a sign that they were satisfied with the position being adopted by their Church. Again, contrasting the Presbyterian experience with that of the Church of England would seem to support this contention.<sup>81</sup>

Whether as a result of Protestant criticism of a completely secular school system or because the government had no intention of abolishing religion in the schools but simply wanted to restructure the school system, the new School Act made provision for religious exercises. The legislation created a Department of Education which consisted of an Executive Council and an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board consisted of seven members; four appointed by the Government, two elected by public and high school teachers, and one to be appointed by the University.<sup>82</sup> The Advisory Board had the power to make regulations regarding textbooks, curriculum, teacher qualifications, the appointment of examiners, and the form of religious exercises for the schools.<sup>83</sup> Religious exercises were limited by law to just before the closing hour in the afternoon, although they could be withheld at the option of the school trustees, and parents were allowed to absent their children if it was against their conscience.<sup>84</sup> The first meeting of the Advisory Board set

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<sup>81</sup> See pp. 135-143.

<sup>82</sup> S.E. Lang, "History of Education in Manitoba," reprinted in Clark, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

the religious exercises for new schools as:

a) the reading without note or comment of the following sections of the authorized English version of the Bible or the Douay version of the Bible [followed by a list of Old and New Testament scripture readings], b) the use of the following forms of prayer [followed by three prayers.]<sup>85</sup>

This adhered closely to the proposals set out by George Bryce in the fall of 1889. Despite the previous positions of the King and Robertson groups the new schools and the amount of religion were endorsed "almost unanimously" at the May 1890 Synod.<sup>86</sup> The religious instruction issue had been abandoned in favour of the more important issue of establishing a school system they considered suitable for a British and Protestant province.

If the Presbyterians were pleased with the new school system, the Roman Catholic Church found it totally unacceptable. In accordance with their religious beliefs, the Roman Catholics in Manitoba felt they needed strict denominational control of the schools which the new system denied them. As French Canadians, they saw the national schools as an attack on their minority rights and as a threat to their cultural survival.<sup>87</sup> They believed the Manitoba Act guaranteed their rights as a minority and, therefore, they

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>85</sup> Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), RG 19 B1, Minutes of the Advisory Board of Education, May 21, 1890.

<sup>86</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Synod of Manitoba and the North West, May 12, 1890.

<sup>87</sup> Clague, p. 6.

launched court action in the case of Barrett vs. Winnipeg to have the new legislation declared unconstitutional.

The Roman Catholic challenge to the constitutionality of the School Act brought a reaction from the Presbyterians which displayed considerably more confidence in its legality than Robertson had shown in 1877. At the 1891 Synod, the Church endorsed, on a motion by Robertson, the Government's position in the Barrett vs. Winnipeg case.

Motion - Forasmuch as this Synod at its meeting in Portage La Prairie in May 1890 declared in favour of unifying the public school system, and inasmuch as difficulties have arisen in carrying out what is believed to be the desire of the large majority of the people of Manitoba, the Synod expresses the hope that every reasonable means may be used to test the legality of the Act passed by the Legislature, by taking the matter before the Privy Council of the Empire.<sup>88</sup>

In his report to General Assembly Robertson noted that the Church in Manitoba looked forward to the challenge and hoped for a speedy decision in favour of the Government.

The 1891 Synod was confronted by another, more difficult issue. At that Synod one of their own challenged their assumptions that they, and the rest of Manitoba, were being correct and fair to the minority in the implementation of the majority's social agenda through the schools. Reverend James Farquharson, a minister from Pilot Mound, Manitoba, proposed a motion which, while endorsing the value of a national school system in developing the unity of the coun-

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<sup>88</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the 1891 Synod of Manitoba and the North West, November 16, 1891.

try, attacked the principle of forcing Roman Catholics to participate in it against their will. Additionally, the motion would have required the Government not to interfere with "anything that may be reasonably regarded as a solemn compact entered into between the Dominion Government and Roman Catholics as expressed in the Dominion Act establishing the Province of Manitoba."<sup>89</sup> Farquharson's motion was soundly defeated but remained an issue that had not yet been fully resolved.

At the 1892 Synod, Farquharson reiterated his challenge of the Church's position. Once again a motion was passed endorsing the national school system. This time, Farquharson asked that his name be put into the records as dissenting from the motion after which he presented his reasons for so doing:

1. Although on parents, and not on the state, devolves the duty of determining how children are to be educated, yet the Synod's resolution recommends the state to compel all to support one system of schools.

2. At least some Roman Catholic parents are so thoroughly opposed to the education given in the public schools, that although compelled by law to support the said schools, they refuse to send their children to them, and voluntarily maintain parochial schools.

3. If the people in the province and of the Dominion are to become speedily one in sentiment, which we all desire, the majority must deal not only justly, but also generously with the minority.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the 1891 Synod of Manitoba and the North West, November 16, 1891.

<sup>90</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the 1892 Synod of Manitoba and

Robertson and Hogg were asked to form a committee to respond to Farquharson's criticisms. Their reply was a classic statement of the Church's position. In answer to the first criticism, they responded that the Synod's resolution contemplated no interference by the State in the rights of parents. They argued that since education to some extent determines the character of the citizen, the State had a right to determine the nature of the school system. Further, since a democratically elected State can be said to be controlled by the will of the majority of the parents, the school system that the State creates will represent the wishes of the majority. Finally, they argued that since the schools were totally free from denominational bias and equally open to all, it could not be a hardship to force everyone to support the schools.<sup>91</sup>

Concerning Farquharson's second point, they refused to admit this as a reason for dissenting from the motion. They argued that taxation to support the public schools, did not depend on whether people used them or not. Parents who had no children still paid school taxes. If Roman Catholics wished to have privileges not available to all in the public schools, then it was reasonable that they should be required to pay extra for them.

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the North West of the Presbyterian Church in Canada,  
November 18, 1892.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, November 28, 1892.

Robertson and Hogg raised three issues in response to Farquharson's final point. First, they maintained that since the national school system placed all denominations on an equal footing, it would be unfair to suggest that the majority was acting unjustly toward the minority. Secondly, they responded that the Synod and State should not be expected to allocate public funds to the teaching of religious beliefs which they viewed to be wrong. Finally, they argued that granting separate schools would not act to unify the people of Canada but instead would promote disharmony.

Although Farquharson's challenge would appear on the surface to be a relatively minor annoyance to the Church, the efforts that the Synod, through Robertson and Hogg, made to meet that challenge indicate just how seriously they took it. The tradition of liberal democracy that the Presbyterian Church believed to be part of its heritage was not one they would violate lightly. Normally challenges to their position could be easily met by deprecating the source as either biased, uninformed or sinister in intention.<sup>92</sup> They were unable to dismiss Farquharson so easily. Not only was he one of the more popular members of the clergy but he had

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<sup>92</sup> This technique allowed the Presbyterians to successfully ignore the critiques of J. S. Ewart, lay Presbyterian and lawyer for the Roman Catholic Church and Reverend George Grant, Principal of Queen's College and one of the authors of the 1888 Presbyterian position on religion and education. Grant toured the Province in 1895 writing articles critical of Manitoba's school policy. See C. Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 136-137; see also, Winnipeg Tribune, March 23, 1895.

been persistent and demanding in calling attention to the inconsistencies in the arguments the Church was advocating. However, despite his efforts, Farquharson was unable to make the Church see the hypocrisy of their position.<sup>93</sup> The paternalistic tyranny of the majority evident in the arguments of the Presbyterian clergy in 1877, 1889 and in the Robertson-Hogg response in 1892 continued to be a constant theme in the writings and public discussions of influential Church members. The implications of these arguments were that it was fair and within the British democratic tradition for the majority to decide the form and structure of the society without consultation or care as to the interests or concerns of the minority since the minority had the option, whether able to or not, of paying extra for the privilege of withdrawing from the schools. As to constitutional guarantees for the rights of the minority, Bryce developed a convoluted argument attempting to show that the Manitoba Act had been improperly drafted and thus no such rights existed.<sup>94</sup> For Robertson, and presumably others in the clergy, it was enough to dismiss the Constitution with the assertion that "a progressive state does not get its legislation from the graveyard."<sup>95</sup> Throughout the controversy, the Presbyterians

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<sup>93</sup> Although Farquharson ceased to play a significant role on the School Question, he continued to defend the rights of minorities for many years to come. See his letter "Objects to Stand Taken by Clergy" in the Manitoba Free Press, June 2, 1905.

<sup>94</sup> Manitoba Free Press, May 11, 1895.

<sup>95</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, June 16, 1896. See also N. McDonald, p. 78.

clung to the belief that they were reformers rather than bigots. After all, George Bryce pointed out, "many of his intimate friends were Catholics and Catholics had always been in attendance at the Manitoba College."<sup>96</sup>

The decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1891 that the Public School Act of 1890 was intra vires quieted Presbyterian discussion of the school issue. Certainly, Robertson's reports to the General Assembly concerning western Canada for 1893-1894 treated the issue as if it were entirely settled. As he wrote in 1894, "the school issue is quiescent in Manitoba."<sup>97</sup> However, when the Federal Government began to discuss the possibility of remedial legislation, following the Brophy case, Manitoba Presbyterians reacted even more violently than they had in the early years of the controversy. The Synod once again passed a motion affirming support for the national school system and suggested that any changes would be viewed with great disfavour. They also appointed a committee to hold a watching brief on the various levels of government and to "take measures as they deem judicious for monitoring our unsectarian system of education."<sup>98</sup> As well, for the first time the issue was raised at the General Assembly in a way that was more than simply endorsing the motion of the Manitoba Pres-

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<sup>96</sup> Manitoba Free Press, May 11, 1895.

<sup>97</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Acts and Proceedings of the 1894 General Assembly, Appendix No. 1.

<sup>98</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the 1894 Synod of Manitoba and the North West, 1894.

byterians.

A series of motions presented at the General Assembly of 1895 by people from outside Manitoba initiated a heated debate.<sup>99</sup> The motions varied from threats of Presbyterian displeasure toward the Federal Government should it pass remedial legislation, to motions which sought to prevent any position being taken by the Presbyterian Church as it would be an abrogation of the principle of the separation of Church and State. Debate raged for two days before it was suggested that a committee be struck of the movers and seconders of each of the five motions and other interested parties whose responsibility would be to create a compromise amendment. This was done and the committee presented a motion which affirmed the previous stand of the Church supporting a national school system and the idea of Christianity in the schools with the added hope that the Federal and Provincial Governments would settle the matter amicably through negotiations.

This lowest common denominator resolution reflected a compromise between the hard line support for national schools of men like Principal William Caven of Knox College and the more limited but influential support for tolerance toward the minority and the traditional relationship between Church and school represented by George Grant. As the 1896 election approached the motions in first the Synod and then

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<sup>99</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1895.

the Assembly became increasingly belligerent. In the Synod of 1895 the Federal Government was threatened not only with the ill will of Manitoba Presbyterians but also with the possible disintegration of Confederation.<sup>100</sup> At the 1896 General Assembly, on the very eve of the election, threats similar to those of Synod were made and passed, unlike the more tolerant stance taken in Assembly during the previous year.<sup>101</sup>

The increase in vehemence in the tone of Presbyterians both inside and outside Manitoba in 1895-1896 seemed to have a reason apart from the school issue. It has been suggested numerous times that there was a close link between liberalism and Presbyterianism.<sup>102</sup> This is not to suggest that the Church was simply trying to influence the election for partisan political reasons but rather that the clergy genuinely supported the policy of provincial rights which was threatened by the remedial legislation. This would perhaps explain the marked difference in the way the issue was treated at the level of the General Assembly in the last two years before the Laurier-Greenway Compromise and the first five years in which it was discussed.

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<sup>100</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the 1895 Synod of Manitoba and the North West, 1895.

<sup>101</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1896.

<sup>102</sup> C. L. Macdonald, "George Bryce", p. 87; E. G. Cooke, "The Federal Election of 1896 in Manitoba," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1943), p. 47.

The election of the Laurier Government brought an end to further agitation by the Presbyterians. Confident that the remedial order had been staved off and that the national schools would remain, the clergy waited for the final outcome of the battle against separate schools. In November of 1896 it was announced that a compromise had been reached between the Federal and Provincial Governments. Known as the Laurier-Greenway Compromise, it left the national school system intact but provided for limited instruction in languages other than English as well as denominational religious instruction where the numbers warranted.

The Winnipeg Tribune interviewed some of the prominent men of the community as to their reactions to the compromise.<sup>103</sup> The Presbyterian representatives were King, Bryce and Hogg. All three praised the compromise as a reasonable concession to the minority without damaging the integrity of the national schools. However, King and Hogg did have some reservations.<sup>104</sup> They were worried about the difficulties of implementing the clauses for religious instruction. Both suggested that when it was put into place the system might

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<sup>103</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, November 21, 1896. See also, Manitoba Free Press, Nov. 21, 1896 for King's views.

<sup>104</sup> The reason Bryce may not have raised any objections could have been because he had agreed to work for Laurier and Sifton to assist in the implementation of the Compromise. See C. L. Macdonald, "George Bryce," p. 15. Perhaps not wishing to interfere with his political ambitions, Bryce did not publicly express the serious reservations he felt about the agreement. See Ibid, p. 18. See also PAM, MG 4 B4, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Papers, June 27, 1896 and March 12, 1898; Laurier to Bryce, March 16, 1898.

not work as smoothly as it was hoped.

In conclusion, the Presbyterian Church went through a considerable evolution in the years following Manitoba's entry into Confederation. Largely the result of a massive influx of laity and clergy into the Province, this change left the Presbyterians with a significantly different set of attitudes and background than was evident in 1871. The Red River Presbyterians who were comfortable with their parish schools and lived within a society which recognized itself as a duality were supplanted by Ontario Presbyterians with their tradition of non-sectarian instruction and their vision of a dynamic Manitoba within the British Empire.

The change in Presbyterianism brought with it a different perspective on the role of the Church, society and education. The incoming Presbyterians treated the schools not only as places for education but also as the principal mechanism for assimilation of non-English peoples. Given this and their vision of the West as an Anglo-Protestant fulfillment of God's wishes, it was only a matter of time before an attack was made on the principle of duality inherent in the original school system. Presbyterians approached the school issue with the zeal of righteous reformers challenging a system they believed to be anti-democratic and imposed upon them to benefit a grasping and unnecessary minority. That the facts did not fit their theory did not bother them in the least. The failure of the first attack

on the schools in 1875-1877 did not conclude the issue but rather put it into a dormant state while other more tractable concerns were pursued. When the issue surfaced again in 1889, the Presbyterian Clergy, quietly supported by their laity, aggressively pressed the point, assuming a leadership role both in the movement to create the national schools and in the struggle to protect them. Ignoring their Church's own traditions in terms of education and support for minority rights, as Reverend Farquharson brought to their attention, they helped to create a climate of acceptance for the change in the school system by providing a semblance of intellectual justification for the actions of the Greenway Government.

## Chapter IV

### THE METHODIST CHURCH

Methodism arrived in Red River in 1868, much later than the other two major Protestant churches. Although British Wesleyan Methodists had begun operating in Rupert's Land in 1840 they studiously avoided working in the Colony.<sup>105</sup> The British Methodists' sole reason for being in Rupert's Land was for the evangelization of the natives and this work focused their energies on the north. Red River had few if any Methodists among its Protestant population and establishing a Methodist mission there would have run the risk of needless conflict with the established Anglican and Presbyterian communities. More importantly, any such conflict could have caused the Hudson's Bay Company to withdraw its already tenuous support from the northern missions. Given Methodists' dependence on the Company for accommodation, transportation and supplies, the Church needed to avoid such a crisis at all costs.<sup>106</sup> British Wesleyans, therefore, had

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<sup>105</sup> W. H. Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), p. 125.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-3, 18-20; see also Gerald Hutchinson, "British Methodists and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1840-1848," in Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church in the West, D. L. Butcher, C. Macdonald, M. E. McPherson, R. R. Smith and A. M. Watts, (Editors), (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), pp. 28-43.

little lasting impact on the social development of Manitoba.

In 1854, responsibility for Methodist mission work in Rupert's Land was transferred from the British Wesleyan Methodists to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada.<sup>107</sup> The Canada Conference of the Canadian Church established a special committee to study the condition of the Methodist missions in the territory. The committee sent out Reverend John Ryerson to assess the situation.<sup>108</sup> Included in his report was a recommendation that the Church should establish some presence in the Red River Colony. Ryerson's report met with a favourable response in Canada but the Church was slow to implement his recommendations. Due to a lack of funds and interest on the part of the Ontario Methodists, the Rupert's Land missions fell into a period of long neglect. It took fourteen years for the Methodists to take up the challenge of their missions in the territory. Included in this reorganization was the development of a Red River District which consisted of two Northern mission stations, Norway House Circuit and Oxford House Circuit aimed at native

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<sup>107</sup> Although there were several Methodist Churches which came from Eastern Canada and operated in Manitoba and the Northwest between 1870 and 1884 (see Brooks pp. 211-306), this thesis will concentrate only on the dominant strain in Manitoba Methodism. The other Churches were too small and not sufficiently influential on educational issues to justify the required digression. Thus, the term Methodism in this chapter will refer to both the broad tradition that Methodists had in common and more specifically the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada to 1874; the Methodist Church of Canada from 1874 to 1883; and the Methodist Church after 1884.

<sup>108</sup> Brooks, pp. 95-96.

mission work, and the Red River Circuit designed to establish a presence among the Red River Colonists.<sup>109</sup>

The relatively late arrival of Methodism has considerable importance since it meant that, unlike the other two major Protestant churches, its initial influence in Red River came from Ontario. This in turn meant that there were no existing British or local Methodist traditions or perspectives to which incoming settlers and clergy from Ontario were forced to adapt or to challenge. Thus, Methodists in Red River and subsequently Manitoba came from a common background and possessed a roughly homogeneous set of attitudes on social and theological issues.

The religion that these Methodists brought with them is fascinating both for the simplicity of its theology and the complexity of its history. Methodism, developed by John Wesley during the eighteenth century evangelical awakening, began as a simple faith based on popular rationalism combined with emotional fervour.<sup>110</sup> It appealed to the British urban working class who had become estranged from their traditional church, the Church of England, when it had been unwilling or unable to adapt to the needs of the urban poor. Methodism spread quickly across the Atlantic, finding a welcome reception in both the American frontier and the British North American Colonies. In North America it found a large

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<sup>109</sup> J. H. Riddell, Methodism in the Middle West, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1946), pp. 59-69.

<sup>110</sup> Brooks, pp. I-II.

following because of its flexibility and simple direct emotionalism. The basic structure of Methodism rested on the class meetings where emphasis was placed on oratorical ability, emotional fervour and public piety rather than on complicated theological arguments or a traditional liturgy. In addition, there were the characteristic Methodist circuit riders who travelled unaccompanied from homestead to homestead preaching the Gospel in outlying areas.

The class meetings and circuit riders served a useful social function among the scattered populations found on the frontier. The class meetings, apart from their value in terms of emotional catharsis through public religious affirmation, served as a badly needed source of public entertainment and as a focal point for the community. The circuit riders were important sources of news and information for the isolated homesteads. It was during this period that Canadian Methodism displayed its greatest religious strength although not its greatest secular wealth. Indeed Methodism seemed to draw its vitality from the adverse conditions of the frontier.

In Upper Canada, as elsewhere, as the Colony became more settled and Methodists themselves became more prosperous, the Church began to lose the evangelical zeal which had originally characterized it. Although similar to the changes in the Presbyterian Church,<sup>111</sup> for the Methodists the

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<sup>111</sup> See previous chapter, p. 27-29.

drift away from what had made it initially successful was much more serious since they did not have a strong body of doctrine on which to fall back in order to define themselves in the face of social change.<sup>112</sup> The Methodist Church became increasingly institutionalized, developing settled churches, abandoning its more flexible structures and toning down its public emotionalism. It became more bureaucratic, losing its passionate evangelical outlook.<sup>113</sup> Devoid of any substantive doctrine, the Methodists turned to their developing middle class values and perspectives as a basis for self-definition as a Church and as a focus for the Church's role in society.

This transition from a theological to social perspective created little difficulty for the Methodists. For the most part, the clergy of the Church themselves were drawn from the middle class and those who were not often had little influence over decision making.<sup>114</sup> More importantly, many middle class businessmen and professionals financially supported the Church and the Church, eager to maintain its source of funding, was reluctant to alienate them.<sup>115</sup> In doing so, the Church blurred the line between theological and social issues to such an extent as to make the division meaningless

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<sup>112</sup> Brooks, p. 307.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 307.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, pp. 327-328.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 313.

The Church became concerned with primarily negative social issues in the sense that the issues were either restrictive in terms of people's social behaviour or were directed attacks at others' beliefs.<sup>116</sup> Prominent among the first type were issues such as sabbatarianism and temperance while among the second was the Church's consistent antipathy towards the Roman Catholic Church. In short, in order to protect their threatened sense of identity created by declining doctrinal vigour, the Methodists began to define themselves by what they were not rather than by what they were. One of the few positive social issues associated with Methodism was a support for nationalism/imperialism, in particular Ontario expansion into the west.<sup>117</sup> While this was at least a positive issue rather than a restrictive one, it had less to do with Methodist tradition than with its popularity among the Ontario middle class.

In 1868 the Church sent Reverend George Young to be the first Methodist clergyman in the Red River Colony and the first Chairman of the Red River District. A fitting repre-

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p. 307; G. N. Emery has also noted that it was this same lack of doctrinal tradition that opened many Methodists to a strong left wing perspective at the end of the Century and made the Church a leader among the Social Gospel movement. G. N. Emery, "The Origins of Canadian Methodist Involvement in the Social Gospel Movement, 1890-1914," Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 104-118. For a contrast of the two social perspectives within one family of Canadian Methodists see B. Smillie, "The Woodsworths: James and J. S. - Father and Son" in Butcher et. al., pp. 100-121.

<sup>117</sup> Brooks, pp. 309-310.

sentative of Ontario Methodism, Young has been described as someone who under normal circumstances would have probably been just another typical Methodist bureaucrat but under the exigencies of time and place he developed, for better or worse, into an ardent Canadian patriot.<sup>118</sup> Young was forced to contend with a number of difficult conditions in his work. He had some trouble obtaining a building in which Methodists could worship and was forced to travel extensively as there were great distances between committed or potential Methodists. Young also had to contend with the disdain of the established Protestant churches. The Church of England, in particular, made quite clear that Young's arrival was not appreciated, placing covert obstacles in his way.<sup>119</sup> This was not just an isolated view of the local Church of England clergy but reflected an historic pattern of relations between Methodists and Anglicans, including an Anglican sense of superiority to Methodists and the Methodist struggle with their own sense of inferiority.

The circumstances of the Colony forced Young to return briefly to the roots of Methodism in order to establish his Church. He organized "enthusiastic and vital" class meetings in the homes of interested parties.<sup>120</sup> These class meetings were a clear contrast to the more staid services offered by the Presbyterians and Anglicans and they did

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 126.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 154.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, pp. 154-155.

attract a small but significant following. Young was successful enough at gaining members that the Church deemed it necessary to provide him with an assistant in 1869, Reverend Matthew Robison. This enthusiastic period in Manitoba Methodism was short-lived and, with the construction of settled churches and an increase in the prosperity of local Methodists, the Church quietly embraced a comfortable institutionalism.<sup>121</sup>

The Riel crisis gave a significant boost to Methodism in the Northwest. Young, imbued with all the anti-Catholicism and strident nationalism associated with Canadian Methodism, allied himself very clearly with the "Canadian Party" led by Dr. J. C. Schultz, a group of Canadians in the Colony who opposed the indigenous social and political structures and instead identified themselves with Ontario expansionism.<sup>122</sup> He offered religious comfort and military exhortations to the Canadians before and after their expedition against Riel's forces. Young became a hero in Protestant Ontario for his ministrations to Thomas Scott, the Orangeman executed by the Provisional Government. His reputation in Ontario as a Protestant patriot was further enhanced in 1871 when he acted as the chaplain for part of the volunteer force brought together to repel an abortive Fenian raid.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p. 321.

<sup>122</sup> George Young, Leaves From My Life in the Prairie Province, 1868-1884, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897), pp. 100-173.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, pp. 212-230.

The rebellion triggered an increase in the local Methodist population as Ontario Methodists, no doubt inspired by the same motives as Young, signed up in substantial numbers for the military expedition collected to put down the rebellion. The Canadian Methodist Church General Conference estimated that as many as 80% of the 1143 volunteers were Methodists.<sup>124</sup> Many of these men remained to settle in the newly created Province of Manitoba, and they attracted family and friends to swell the local Methodist community. Several years later Young described the importance of this expedition to the local Methodists, writing that "This sudden influx of earnest workers afforded ground for encouragement and special rejoicing to the small band who had been toiling under great discouragements, ever trying to avoid the 'despising of the day of small things,' and to look confidently forward to the arrival of great things."<sup>125</sup>

This growth was supplemented by a high percentage of Methodists among the waves of settlers from Ontario in the 1870's and 1880's with the Methodist population of the Province growing to 9,460 in 1881, 18,617 in 1886 and 28,210 in 1891.<sup>126</sup> Within a very short time Methodism became a significant force in the new Province. Methodists began quickly to figure prominently among the Province's business and profes-

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, pp. 193-194.

<sup>126</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Censuses of 1881, 1886 and 1891.

sional community, including such figures as James Ashdown, Thomas Greenway and Clifford Sifton. The growing wealth in the Province's Methodist community gave the Church a local financial base to supplement funding from Ontario. With this increase in numbers and wealth came greater social influence for the Methodist Church in Manitoba. Despite these gains, particularly during the years of the Greenway Government, Methodist leaders continuously felt that they were lagging behind the other Churches in social prestige.<sup>127</sup>

In 1883 the Canada Methodist Church recognized the growing strength and self-sufficiency of Methodism in western Canada by transferring jurisdiction from the Conference of Toronto and creating the self-governing Conference of Manitoba and the North West.<sup>128</sup> The new Conference covered an area extending from North Western Ontario to the Rockies with the greatest concentration of Church members in Manitoba. George Young, who had left the Province in 1876, returned to Manitoba in 1883 to be the first President of the Conference and Superintendent of Missions, directing the Conference's seventy ministers. In 1884 the Conference was further strengthened by the absorption of several smaller, less viable, Methodist denominations as part of the general

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<sup>127</sup> United Church Archives (UCA), General Conference (Toronto), Reverend Albert Carman Papers, Reverend John Maclean to Carman, Oct. 1, 1901.

<sup>128</sup> Riddell, p. 123.

unification of Canadian Methodism in The Methodist Church<sup>129</sup>

Methodists in Manitoba and the North West Territories were as determined to act as the conscience of their region as were their central Canadian counterparts. They aggressively pursued social topics, including their particular brand of nationalism, from the pulpit and in their myriad public organizations, merging social, religious and political themes. Brooks wrote that the Methodists "never seemed to decide clearly whether they were spreading Christian civilization, moral respectability, or the blessings of British civilization."<sup>130</sup> As Owram pointed out, they and other Protestants, drew little distinction among the three, believing them to be interrelated as a final objective.<sup>131</sup>

Included in their sense of the proper functioning of society was the role of public schools. The Methodist approach to education in Canada had been clearly established long before George Young arrived in Red River. Originally, the Methodist Church had supported a close connection between religion and education. Methodists in British North America established a number of primary, secondary and post-secondary schools, all of which taught secular subjects against a background of Wesleyan Methodist thought.<sup>132</sup> How-

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, p. 130.

<sup>130</sup> Brooks, p. 206.

<sup>131</sup> D. Owram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 148.

ever, as the Church secularized, so did the schools. For example, in Methodist colleges, religious instruction gradually evolved first into specific courses required of all students and then into specialized courses, required only of theology or religion students.<sup>133</sup> The schools became difficult to distinguish from non-denominational institutions; more monuments to the wealth and influence of the Methodist laity rather than an expression of Methodist traditions.

This transition was of considerable importance in the 1840's and 1850's when the Upper Canadian middle class began to reject the use of private schools in favour of a non-denominational public school system. Church members, particularly Reverend Egerton Ryerson, moved into the forefront of the movement to shape and implement the national schools. Methodists took great pride in the new schools, believing themselves to be largely responsible for the system's success.<sup>134</sup> Ryerson, the architect and first Superintendent of the national school system in Ontario, became something of a mythic figure within the Church as a result of his educational efforts. Methodists were less happy with the existence of the Ontario separate school system and the Christian Guardian made occasional calls for its abolition.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Brooks, pp. 341-342.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, pp. 342-343.

<sup>134</sup> Christian Guardian, December 20, 1876.

<sup>135</sup> For example see Christian Guardian, August 25, 1875.

The Methodist support for non-denominational education did not mean that the Church accepted completely secular schools. While formal religious instruction was considered to be the prerogative of home and church, Methodists strongly believed that some form of religious exercises, both prayers and Bible readings, was necessary to acknowledge the presence of God in the schools.<sup>136</sup> Occasionally, some Methodists demanded more from the schools. In the 1870's and 1880's, a vocal minority within the Church called for the use of the Bible as a textbook in secular courses such as English, history and morals. The Christian Guardian carried numerous articles addressing the issue.<sup>137</sup> Supporters of the Bible as an instructional tool refused to acknowledge that the implementation of their demands would be a form of religious instruction, arguing that the Bible was a source of knowledge for many subjects other than religion.<sup>138</sup> Their critics charged that this was indeed a form of surreptitious religious instruction and was a violation of the Methodist traditional respect for the separation of Church and State. Furthermore, they charged that this extended use of the

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<sup>136</sup> Goldwin French, Parsons and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes From 1780 to 1855, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 234-235.

<sup>137</sup> For an example of an article favouring the position see "The Bible in the Schools" Christian Guardian, November 22, 1882. For an opposing view see "Six Reasons Why the Bible Should Not be a Textbook", Christian Guardian, October 25, 1882.

<sup>138</sup> "The Bible in the Schools", Christian Guardian, April 26, 1882.

Bible was unnecessary since the use of religious exercises and diligence in the selection of teachers with a "good moral background" was sufficient to preserve the Christian nature of the schools.<sup>139</sup>

Methodism had no time to establish an indigenous education tradition in Red River before the creation of the Province of Manitoba and the Province's dual school system. No interest was shown in building a Methodist school; the first priority had been the need for a church and manse.<sup>140</sup> Despite the lack of a Methodist school to contribute to the system, Young was given a position on the Protestant section of the dual School Board, presumably in recognition of the growing significance of the Church in Manitoba.<sup>141</sup> However, Young and other Methodists displayed little loyalty to the Protestant school system presumably because they considered the new system to be a public acknowledgement of the Red River denominational schools. Furthermore the Methodists disapproved of dividing the schools along denominational lines since they felt education and religion should be separated and because it acknowledged the position of Roman Catholics in Manitoba through giving them their own school system.<sup>142</sup> The Methodists saw dual schools as a threat to

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<sup>139</sup> "State Education", Christian Guardian, August 24, 1881.

<sup>140</sup> Young, pp. 268-269.

<sup>141</sup> S. E. Lang, "History of Education in Manitoba," reprinted in L. C. Clark (ed.), The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Right, (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1968), p. 15.

the future of "God's Dominion." Finally, it seems probable that Young was unhappy with the dual system because it reflected the old realities of the Red River Colony rather than the Ontario public system with which he identified.

According to Young's autobiography, Methodists had little respect for the efficiency of the Protestant schools and many of them put their children into Roman Catholic schools in search of a better secular education.<sup>143</sup> Young wrote that these parents were horrified when their children brought home "unprotestant notions and customs such as crossing themselves before meals, etc."<sup>144</sup> and turned to their own Church for a solution to their problem. As a result Young established a small primary school, the Wesleyan Methodist Institute, on the grounds of Grace Church, and brought a teacher, Mrs. D. L. Clink from Ontario to operate it.<sup>145</sup>

Young's explanation for the establishment of the Institute wears thin upon closer examination. Either these Methodist parents were extremely obtuse about what education their children would receive in the Roman Catholic schools or else Young had ascribed a concern to them which was perhaps not existent. More likely it was Young and other Church leaders who were horrified at the prospect of Method-

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<sup>142</sup> Young, pp. 269-270.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 270.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, p. 270.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p. 270.

ist children at Catholic institutions. At the same time the Methodist children in the Protestant schools were in a system dominated by the Anglicans and the Presbyterians which to Young was only marginally better than the Roman Catholic schools. The Wesleyan Methodist Institute offered an opportunity to pressure the parents to remove their children and put them into an institution controlled by their own Church. In addition, the rejection of the public school system inherent in the creation of the Institute gave Young a chance to snub Bishop Machray and others in the Church of England who had shown contempt for him and for Methodism since his arrival.

In June of 1873, Young went on a fund raising expedition to Ontario and Quebec in order to raise money to expand the Institute.<sup>146</sup> He managed to collect \$6,000.00, of which \$3,000.00 went to school supplies, furnishings and a new building.<sup>147</sup> On November 8, 1873 the Institute moved into a new school on the original site. Mrs. Clink had apparently left, and the direction of the Institute was passed to Principal (later Reverend) Allen Bowerman, B. A.<sup>148</sup>

The Wesleyan Methodist Institute lasted until 1877 at which time it was closed for financial reasons. Parents balked at paying twice for their children's education, both

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid, pp. 270-271.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, p. 271.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p. 273

public school taxes and the Institute's fees.<sup>149</sup> The Institute was never able to attract sufficient students to ensure its financial viability, its peak year being 1875 when it had 71 students out of a potential enrollment for 100.<sup>150</sup> Finally the deficit the Institute incurred grew too great for the Church to continue funding.

Despite its brief existence the Institute was important for reasons beyond simply the education it offered to its students. The school did provide an alternative, however effective, for those parents uncomfortable with sending their children to the Protestant schools, the Roman Catholic schools or the Church of England's St. John's College School. It also paved the way for a charter for a Methodist college in the Provincial statute which created the University of Manitoba in 1877. That charter was later used to create Wesley College in 1888.<sup>151</sup>

Perhaps the most important contribution of the Institute was that it helped to maintain a sense of distance between the Methodist Church and the Protestant school system of Manitoba. The years the Wesleyan Methodist Institute existed corresponded exactly to the period in which W. F. Luxton, George Bryce and James Robertson agitated for the abolition of the dual school system and its replacement with a

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 272.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 274.

<sup>151</sup> Riddell, p. 98.

national school system.<sup>152</sup> Neither George Young nor any other Methodist clergyman or layman participated in this debate. Given the Methodist attitudes toward the existence of publicly supported Roman Catholic schools and their devotion to the Ontario school system, they could be reasonably expected not only to agree with this agitation but to have vociferously pressed the point. Their absence from the debate clearly denied Luxton, Bryce and their supporters potentially valuable allies in their struggle to change the school system.

Maintaining the Church's distance from the Protestant public school system was not without its consequences. In 1876, the Methodists lost their one position on the Protestant section of the public School Board when George Young returned to Ontario and his successor, Reverend J. F. German was not named to the Board. Instead the Government of Premier R. A. Davis appointed a Presbyterian layman, lawyer W. H. Ross. Despite their opposition to the dual school system, local Methodists were outraged and considered the appointment to be a deliberate insult. The Church's national newspaper, the Christian Guardian agreed:

The Government of Manitoba is not, in this case, at liberty to plead any change of policy, in justification of their course, so long as the chief ministers of all the other leading religious bodies have seats at the Board. And the same principle was advantageously carried out in the formation of the Council of Public Instruction in Ontario - a province which a Methodist minister did so much to place in the front rank in respect

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<sup>152</sup> See previous chapter, p. 31-35.

to education. It is well known, also, that in University education and Ladies Colleges, we took the lead of every other church in this country. We cannot, therefore, consider it anything else than a public insult, that they have been excluded from the Board of Education."<sup>153</sup>

The closure of the Institute forced the Church to come to terms with the dual school system. Ironically, given the contempt Young showed toward the Protestant schools in 1873, the Methodists adjusted to them with surprising equanimity in 1877. In his autobiography Young claimed that this occurred because the schools had dramatically improved in quality during the years the Institute was in operation.<sup>154</sup> While this may have been true there were a number of other more pressing reasons for this change in attitude. First, the financial failure of the Institute showed Methodists that denominational schools without public support were not financially viable without extensive sacrifice in a province with a population as small as Manitoba's, something the Presbyterians and Anglicans had learned before Confederation. Second, the loss of the single Methodist position on the School Board in 1876, although room was found for a representative of the Church in 1877, clearly demonstrated that if the Methodist Church did not exercise what influence they had on public education, they would lose it all. Without the Institute or some other alternative, Methodist rejection of the Manitoba public school system, whatever its form,

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<sup>153</sup> Christian Guardian, December 20, 1876.

<sup>154</sup> Young, p. 272.

would simply result in the isolation of the Methodist Church while other Churches dominated education.

The Methodists' active participation on the Protestant section of the dual School Board did not lead to any radical changes in the operation of the schools. Indeed, Methodist representatives on the Board failed to distinguish themselves in any way. They blended quietly into the Board, neither demanding any radical changes to the system nor providing any outstanding leadership. It is interesting to note that E. F. Sims, in his history of the dual school system, did not identify any Methodists among his list of persons who influenced education in Manitoba between 1871 and 1890.<sup>155</sup>

The Methodists also did not distinguish themselves on the issue of religion in the Protestant schools. The Methodist representatives voted in favour of the formation of a committee to explore increasing non-denominational religious instruction in the Protestant schools in 1880.<sup>156</sup> They participated in the deliberations of that committee and in 1885 voted for the marginal increases in religious exercises approved in that year.<sup>157</sup> Despite this, none of the Method-

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<sup>155</sup> E. F. Sims, "A History of Public Education in Manitoba from 1870 to 1890 Inclusive" (Unpublished M. Ed. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1944), pp. 108-119.

<sup>156</sup> Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), RG 19 A1, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Protestant Section of the Board of Education, May 5, 1880.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, December 2, 1885.

ists appeared to be strong advocates of religion in the schools as were the representatives of the Church of England. Although they gave their support to these motions, they neither initiated them nor argued strongly in their favour.

The Conference of Manitoba and the North West also proved to be relatively conservative in regard to public education. Like the Methodist representatives on the School Board, it displayed no great eagerness to press for an increase in religion in the schools, yet offered no opposition to any such suggestions from other sources. The Conference did make clear that it did not feel that religion in the schools was a necessity for the inculcation of Christian principles in the students. At the meeting of the Conference in 1884, the western Canadian Methodists identified the two institutions responsible for the religious and moral development of Methodist children as being diligent discussion by parents in the home and through the Church particularly the sabbath schools.<sup>158</sup> Public schools were noticeably absent from this list.

The Methodist Church remained quiet on the existence of the Roman Catholic section of the School Board. Like the Presbyterians, the Methodists made no public criticisms of the dual school system between 1877 and 1889. Indeed, they

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<sup>158</sup> UCA, Conference of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Conference of Manitoba and the North West, June 12, 1883.

often wrote glowingly to their compatriots in Ontario of how efficient and modern the Manitoba school system was.<sup>159</sup> The impression given by this seemingly benevolent attitude was that the Methodists had accepted the status quo, abandoning their devotion to the Ontario public schools and their antipathy towards publicly funded Roman Catholic schools. In reality, Methodist anti-Catholicism was lurking just beneath the surface of polite society, covered by a thin veneer of tolerance. These reports were written to impress potential settlers and did not demonstrate any great appreciation of the Manitoba school system. A close reading of these reports suggests that the Methodists reacted to the school system in much the same fashion as the Presbyterians. Since meaningful change in public education was apparently blocked by the Manitoba Act, they simply redefined the Manitoba school system from the Quebec model to the Ontario model. Essentially, the Methodists did not see the two sections of the School Board as equal, rather the Roman Catholic system was an unnecessary and dangerous concession to the minority. They viewed the schools of the Protestant section as the public school system while the Roman Catholic schools were considered equivalent to the Ontario separate school system.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> See, for example, "Our Educational Work in the North West," Christian Guardian, September 14, 1881.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. The Methodists had no great respect for the existence of the Ontario separate schools, see Christian Guardian, Editorial, August 25, 1875.

There were indications in the 1880's that the Methodist Church was a potential source of support for an attack on the rights of the French and Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba. There was a definite increase in anti-Catholic nativism within Methodism in Canada during this decade which resulted from two main factors.<sup>161</sup> First, there was the continued strain on the fabric of the Methodist community brought on by the challenge of issues such as biblical criticism to one of the cornerstones of Methodist tradition - the fundamental literal belief in the Bible.<sup>162</sup> As the Church felt itself fragmenting, anti-Catholicism increased as Methodists searched for ways to make a common cause. Second, the connection between Methodism and western expansion produced several criticisms of minority rights within western Canada since they were seen as being a threat to the British and Protestant country they wished to develop.<sup>163</sup> This was exacerbated by incidents in which the minority attempted to protect rights that were being eroded such as the second Riel Rebellion in 1885. The depth of this feeling is evident in the reaction of the Montreal Conference to the 1885 Rebellion:

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<sup>161</sup> For a discussion of anti-Catholicism in this period, see J. R. Miller, "Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXVI, No. 4, 1985, pp. 474-494.

<sup>162</sup> Brooks, pp. 314-315.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, pp. 309-310. For the writings of one Methodist imperialist, see PAC, MG 29 D65, Reverend John MacLean Papers, Vol. 6, two files entitled "Lecture Notes - Pamphlets."

Resolved - That this Conference desires to record its gratitude to Almighty God for the cessation of the rebellion which has recently disturbed our North-West Territory, and caused much painful anxiety throughout the several Provinces of this Dominion; and to express its admiration of the prompt and loyal response to the call of duty, and the high military qualities displayed by our volunteer force in its suppression, and to assure the wounded and bereaved sufferers of our heartfelt sympathy and earnest prayers in their behalf.<sup>164</sup>

Manitoba Methodists were no different from their Ontario compatriots in their distrust of the Roman Catholics and when the Jesuit Estates Act controversy began, the delegates to the Conference of Manitoba and the North West were quick to make their feelings known. In June of 1889, two months before the McCarthy-Martin speeches in Portage La Prairie, the Conference demonstrated that it took great offense to the actions of the Quebec Government and resented the status which it believed the Act gave the Roman Catholic Church. Prior to the Conference, four separate Districts, Morden, Winnipeg, Portage La Prairie and Saskatchewan, submitted resolutions condemning the Jesuit Estates Act in no uncertain terms.<sup>165</sup> The resolution from the Winnipeg District for example read:

This District Meeting cannot permit the present opportunity to pass without expressing its deep regret at, and earnest protest against, the principles contained in a bill passed by the Quebec Legislature entitled "The Jesuit Estates Act," which bill allows and invites the interference of the Pope as a supreme power in the disposal of public monies, the infringement of the rights of

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<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Brooks, p. 310.

<sup>165</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Conference of Manitoba and the North West, Volume II, 1889-1893, June 20, 1889.

the Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec, the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church with the funds of the public, to the weakening of our broad & general system of education. These, & other principles involved, we regard as a menace to the liberties of the people and a danger to the commonwealth. We hereby put ourselves on record as determinately opposed to such encroachments & pledge ourselves to loyalty to the Queen and fidelity to our national constitution.<sup>166</sup>

The various motions were sent to a special committee of the Conference which drew upon them to produce one resolution. The gist of this resolution involved a condemnation of both Roman Catholicism in general and the Society of Jesus in particular stating that:

We cannot but view with consternation as well as with unyielding hostility the encroachments through such acts as these the Roman Catholic Church is making upon our most cherished protestant faiths and the rights given to us by our fathers. We condemn the order as an alien society hostile to our institution, the enemy of social peace and the happiness of our homes and as the emmissary of the dark counsels of the Church of Rome, for the overthrow of civil freedom.<sup>167</sup>

What distinguishes this resolution on the Jesuit Estates Act from the reactions of other groups in the Province, apart from the degree of sheer malevolence of its anti-Catholicism, was that it also attacked the Federal Government for its refusal to disallow the Act.

The action of the majority of Parliament upon the question of the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act has destroyed our confidence in the present political parties and has convinced us that both

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<sup>166</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Winnipeg District, June 12, 1889.

<sup>167</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Conference of Manitoba and the North West, Volume II, 1889-93, "Report of the Committee on the Jesuit Estates Act," June 20, 1889.

parties are pandering to Rome and Jesuitical influences, and we deem it right and imperative that an organization which has so blinded and led our lawgivers apart from the righteousness which exalteth a nation and a nation's representatives, should be forever crushed out of existence.<sup>168</sup>

The motion was presented to the Conference by Dr. Albert Carman, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church who was visiting the Conference and acted as chair for the session.<sup>169</sup> He painted Canada as a country in a state of civil war between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism and demanded that the Conference pass the resolution in order to show that western Canadian Methodists stood opposed to what he saw as the civil and political dangers of the Roman Catholic Church. The response to Carman was overwhelming as delegate after delegate rose and gave what the Manitoba Free Press described as "red hot speeches on the line of the report."<sup>170</sup> There were a few delegates who disagreed, arguing that the Church should not attack Roman Catholicism but instead should promote Methodism. These dissidents failed to make any impact and the resolution was passed by an overwhelming margin.

Given the depth of the anti-Catholic sentiment displayed at this meeting it is not surprising that Methodists responded favourably to the call for curtailing minority rights expressed in the McCarthy-Martin speeches in August

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Manitoba Free Press, June 21, 1889.

<sup>170</sup> Manitoba Free Press, June 26, 1889.

1889. Prominent churchmen quickly endorsed Martin's proposals for a national school system and for the elimination of the official status of French in Manitoba. In statements published by the Manitoba Sun three prominent Methodist clergymen, Reverends A. Crews, E. Langford and John Semmens, praised Martin's speech and his pledge to abolish the dual school system.<sup>171</sup> Each of them characterized what they referred to as "separate schools" as being a dividing point in the Province and a threat to national unity which they thought should be based on English Protestantism. The three clergymen made it quite clear that they did not believe there was any room in the Province for the existence of minority cultures. Langford, for example, wrote "it appears to me that this country is destined to be a mighty nation (which the signs of the times portend) and the home of an independent people who shall enjoy the great boon of equal rights and privileges. But in my opinion such rights can never be fully realized while we recognize dual languages as we do at present, and support separate [sic] schools."<sup>172</sup>

The three were less pleased about Martin's pledge to make the schools completely secular. They professed no qualms about the elimination of religious instruction in the public schools but argued that God should and must be acknowledged in the schools through religious exercises. Semmens wrote:

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<sup>171</sup> Manitoba Sun, August 22 and 23, 1889.

<sup>172</sup> Manitoba Sun, August 23, 1889.

It is manifestly the duty of the state, avowedly Christian as ours is, to teach the existence of God and the authority of the scripture as a rule of faith and conduct. We can scarcely conceive of an intellectual training without a religious basis. It is equally clear that the moment that the state dictates to private convictions it enters the arena of futile and endless strife. Let the fathers be the patriarchs, as of old, let the home circle pave the way for the theological seminary. Let the churches battle with theologues. Let the state provide for secular instruction, recognizing ever both the law and the law-giver.<sup>173</sup>

The Methodists need not have worried as the Manitoba School Act of 1890 conformed closely to their specifications. This is hardly surprising given the amount of Methodist input into the legislation. Premier Greenway, a staunch Methodist lay preacher, appointed his close friend, adviser and minister, Reverend Andrew Stewart, to the committee charged with drafting the Act.<sup>174</sup> Stewart, a long time advocate of national schools, counted his contribution to the School Act as one of the most significant accomplishments of his career.<sup>175</sup>

At the 1890 meeting of the Conference of Manitoba and the North West the Methodists gave "an unqualified endorsement" of the Provincial Government for "establishing a national school system that recognizes no creed, denomination, or nationality, thereby promoting the unification and cementing

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<sup>173</sup> Manitoba Sun, August 22, 1889.

<sup>174</sup> UCA (Toronto), J. H. Riddell, "Biography of Reverend Andrew Stewart," Stewart Biography file.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

of all classes and at the same time creating a sure and certain safeguard for the education and liberties of the people."<sup>176</sup> The Conference put on record its appreciation of the religious exercises authorised by the Advisory Board of Education. The Methodists also expressed an appreciation for the abolition of the official status of French in Manitoba and recommended that similar legislation with respect to language and education should be passed in the North West Territories. These sentiments were echoed in a resolution at a meeting of the General Conference of the Methodist Church through a motion proposed by Albert Carman.<sup>177</sup>

Apart from this resolution, the Methodist Church in Manitoba contributed little to the public debate during the early years of the School Question. Believing the schools to be safely established, the Church left the defence of the new system to the Provincial Government. Even the Barrett court challenge did not rouse them to further exhortation. The Methodists did send representatives to the meetings organized by the Church of England to explore the possibility of increasing religious instruction in the schools but again played the role they had assumed in the dual school system - neither encouraging nor discouraging any such plans.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> UCA (Winnipeg), Minutes of the Conference of Manitoba and the North West, Volume II, June 25, 1890.

<sup>177</sup> UCA (Toronto), Carman Papers, "1890 Resolution on the Manitoba School Question."

<sup>178</sup> See following chapter, p. 145-146.

The decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Brophy case, that the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba did indeed have a grievance and had the right to appeal to the Federal Government for redress, jolted Methodists out of their complacency. Like the Presbyterians, the Methodists entered into a campaign to block the proposed plans of Sir Mackenzie Bowell's Conservative Government to pass remedial legislation to reinstate Roman Catholic rights which had existed before 1890. Unlike the Presbyterians, this campaign was coordinated nationally rather than centred in Manitoba.<sup>179</sup> At the centre of this agitation was Albert Carman himself. Adamantly anti-Catholic, Carman was a strong opponent of both denominational schools and minority rights.<sup>180</sup> He organized support for the Manitoba national school system in the 1890's and challenged the Alberta and Saskatchewan denominational school systems in 1905.<sup>181</sup> At Carman's request, protest meetings were held and resolutions passed by every District and Conference of the Methodist Church in Canada.<sup>182</sup> This was intended as a message to the Federal Government that remedial legislation could have

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<sup>179</sup> The Christian Guardian, printed many articles dealing with the Manitoba School Question. See, for example, January 16, 1895, August 14, 1895, March 11, 1896 and November 25, 1896.

<sup>180</sup> See "There is a Grievance," Manitoba Free Press, September 19, 1895 for an example of Carman's views.

<sup>181</sup> UCA (Toronto), See Carman Papers, Box 12, File 69, for correspondence between Carman and Reverend James Woodworth Sr. concerning opposition to the 1905 School Question.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, J. Potts to Carman, May 1, 1895.

serious consequences in Protestant Canada. This point was not lost on several of the Conservative caucus who warned Bowell of the potential danger of ignoring Methodist opposition.<sup>183</sup>

Manitoba Methodists played their role in this centrally dominated movement. Like the Presbyterians, the clergy provided the leadership with the laity signalling assent by not criticizing the policies of the Church.<sup>184</sup> They argued energetically at public meetings, in print, and from the pulpit that the national schools needed to be maintained as they were then constituted, contributing to the tone of strident emotionalism in the debate within the Province. On several occasions they were accused of shifting the debate from logical discussion toward unthinking reaction for which they earned the nickname "political parsons."<sup>185</sup> This unreasoning passion is illustrated in a letter written to an unspecified newspaper by Reverend John McDougall, a long time resident of both Manitoba and the North West Territories:

I am not only a citizen & patriot and loyal member of the Commonwealth but am also a "father" in the true sense and meaning of the word and therefore what I say re, the manner and quality of the education of my children and those of my

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<sup>183</sup> Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Sir Mackenzie Bowell Papers, MG 26 E 1(A), J. C. Patterson to Bowell, June, 1895 and Ibid, E. Coatsworthy to Bowell, June 24, 1895.

<sup>184</sup> That is within Church circles. Certainly lay Methodists such as Greenway and Sifton played important roles in the school question outside the Church.

<sup>185</sup> "Protestant Onlooker," Nor'Wester, May 15, 1895. See also Nor'Wester, May 31, 1896.

neighbours should have more weight than the united opinions of 10,000 of others who are merely "Fathers" in a supposedly spiritual sense. What I mean is let the Parents of the children to be educated speak out on this question, remove elesiastical [sic] and [ ] & Superstitious influences out of the way and let the true fathers have their say in the real interests of their children & country & I am confident that we would hear no more of this demand for Separate Schools.

If there is anything in the contention that the Schools of Manitoba as now conducted are Protestant then let these would be "Remedial Legislators" suggest to the Manitoba Government the desirability of eliminating all Sectarian teaching or influence from the Public School and thus make these Schools purely National or Secular . . . In the mean time I in common with tens of Thousands of the loyal citizenship of this wide Dominion would say to all concerned "Hands off" and let Manitoba alone in the education of her youth.<sup>186</sup>

Manitoba Methodists were not hesitant to state officially their position. The Manitoba Methodist Ministerial Association put themselves on record with two separate motions. The first warned Prime Minister Bowell of the wrath of all Manitoba Methodists should the remedial legislation bill be passed.<sup>187</sup> The second pledged support both to the Greenway Government and to the principle of Provincial rights.<sup>188</sup> On June 19, 1895, the Conference of Manitoba and the North West virtually unanimously passed a resolution put forth by

<sup>186</sup> UCA (Toronto), Reverend John MacLean Papers, hand written letter from McDougall to unspecified newspaper, March 5, 1895. See also J. MacLean, McDougall of Alberta: A Life of Reverend John McDougall D.D. Pathfinder of Empire and Prophet of the Plains, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1927), p. 232.

<sup>187</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, March 20, 1895.

<sup>188</sup> PAM, Thomas Greenway Papers, MG 13 E1 Manitoba and North West Conference Ministerial Association to Greenway, June 13, 1895.

Reverend G. R. Turk, one of the most active speakers on the School Question, supporting a General Conference motion which deprecated government support of "purely ecclesiastical and sectarian institutions" and pledged Methodists to cooperate "with other Protestant bodies for the maintenance [sic] in general of civil and religious rights and privileges." In addition, it was resolved that "we deprecate and protest any act of our Dominion or provincial authorities, which would look towards the establishment of separate schools in Manitoba, and the consequent impairment of the national schools as now established by law, which grants equal rights to all without respect to class or creed."<sup>189</sup>

The Methodists were however not without dissension within their Church. Two prominent members of the Church, one a clergyman and the other a layman, challenged the Church's position asserting that there was a minority grievance. The clergyman, Reverend Alfred Andrews, a well-respected minister from Minnedosa, wrote letters to the major newspapers in the Province publicly rebuking his Church for its stand.<sup>190</sup> Andrews had made a similar criticism in 1890 but had let the point pass when he was outvoted on the resolution supporting national schools. His position was very similar to that of Reverend James Farquharson of the Presbyterian Church, demanding "Protestant fair play" for the Roman Catholic minority. Andrews argued that while national schools were

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<sup>189</sup> Manitoba Free Press, June 19, 1895.

<sup>190</sup> Manitoba Free Press, April 12, 1895.

clearly the best system, it was wrong to legally coerce parents to send their children to them. The majority had no right to determine whether or not there had been a grievance against the Roman Catholics in 1890; only the Roman Catholics could decide that. He ridiculed other arguments held dear by his fellow Methodists such as the idea that the Roman Catholics had committed an aggression against the Protestants or that the existence of Roman Catholic schools would lead to demands by all minorities for their own schools. Quite clearly, he wrote, no Protestant could be harmed by funding Roman Catholic schools.

The lay critic, J.A.M. Aikins, was as prominent a Methodist layman as there was in the Province. A well-known lawyer and Conservative politician, Aikins was the son of a former Lieutenant-Governor of the the Province and a future holder of that office in his own right. He was also the Chancellor of Wesley College. Aikins had distinguished himself in 1889 when he joined in the dissent against the Church's position on the Jesuit Estate's Act.<sup>191</sup> He had remained relatively quiet within the Church on the School Question in the intervening years but publicly warned the Church that he intended to challenge the Methodist position at the 1896 Conference.<sup>192</sup> Aikins was a strong supporter of the Remedial Bill, arguing that it was necessary to redress the obvious grievance of 1890. Aikins' critics, however, charged that he was

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<sup>191</sup> Manitoba Free Press, June 26, 1889.

<sup>192</sup> Manitoba Free Press, June 3, 1896.

more concerned with furthering the interests of the Federal Conservatives rather than protecting the rights of Manitoba Roman Catholics.<sup>193</sup>

Aikins and Andrews came to the 1896 Conference prepared to do what they could to moderate the Church's position on the School Question. They faced formidable opposition including Albert Carman who had once again come to Chair the Conference, presumably to make sure that there was no back sliding by Manitoba Methodists. When Turk's 1895 motion was presented for reaffirmation Aikins and Andrews demanded that changes be made to make the resolution more sympathetic to the minority.

The Conference formed a committee, including Aikins and Andrews, whose purpose was to develop a compromise if possible. The Committee met that afternoon and began an argument which lasted the rest of the day. The Winnipeg Tribune reported that although the meeting was supposed to be confidential, voices were raised so high that everyone in the building could hear the proceedings.<sup>194</sup> Aikins predicted that there would be "dire calamities for the Conference in general and Grace Church in particular if Mr. Turk would persist in his motion."<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, June 8, 1896.

<sup>194</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, June 6, 1896.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

Despite the acrimony, the debate did produce a slight compromise. On a suggestion of Andrew Stewart, the Committee proposed a motion to the Conference which in general reaffirmed earlier pronouncements of the Church supporting national schools. However, they now recommended that the Provincial Government amend the School Act to "remove any just cause of complaint on the part of our Roman Catholic fellow citizens, provided that they did not claim any special privileges, beyond those we as Protestants are entitled to possess."<sup>196</sup>

When the motion was presented for a vote it was seconded, to the surprise of many, by Alfred Andrews. Along with the motion was a second one preventing any discussion on the main motion before a vote was taken. The second motion was passed first. This angered James Aikins and he demanded that he be allowed to speak. Carman refused and was upheld by a majority of the delegates. Aikins left the meeting clearly demonstrating his displeasure. Following his departure the compromise motion was passed unanimously.

The 1896 Conference was not quite finished with the School Question. At the following session, Alfred Andrews demanded that he be allowed to withdraw his seconding of the School motion since he had been misled as to the meaning of a seemingly innocuous clause.<sup>197</sup> The clause read:

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, June 8, 1896

That this Manitoba and Northwest Conference of the Methodist Church re-affirms its former expression touching the school question, and again endorses the deliverance of the General Conference touching the question of civil and religious liberties."<sup>198</sup>

This, as Andrews had come to realize, eliminated the value of the compromise that had been reached since it rejected the extension of any distinct rights to the Roman Catholic minority. Carman presented Andrews' request to the Conference which rejected it.

The 1896 Conference was the last strong stand of Manitoba Methodists on the School Question. The Federal election campaign was already underway and within a short time the Laurier Government was in place and the Laurier-Greenway Compromise struck. Surprisingly considering the enthusiasm with which they had attacked the issue in the preceding two years, Methodists were reluctant to discuss the Compromise. The interviews conducted by the Free Press and Tribune on reactions to the Compromise netted only one Methodist clergyman, Dr. J. W. Sparling, and two Methodist laymen, James Aikins and James Ashdown, willing to comment. All three professed themselves pleased with the pact. Aikins did express concern that there would be difficulty in implementation but he hoped that this would not be the case stating the "it will be a great day for Manitoba if this School Question is disposed of."<sup>199</sup> Ashdown was somewhat condescending, saying that the solution would give the Roman Cath-

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<sup>198</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, June 6, 1896.

<sup>199</sup> Free Press, November 21, 1896.

olics a good secular education for a change.<sup>200</sup> Sparling refused to speak at any length but pronounced himself satisfied, saying that "it seems to be equal rights for all and special privileges to none."<sup>201</sup>

In conclusion, the Methodists contributed a tone of strident emotionalism to the debate over the School Question. This resulted from three main causes: a clergy and laity almost exclusively from Ontario which lead to an identification with the public school system of that province; a close link between the Church and Canadian Protestant nationalism/imperialism; and, a strong tradition of anti-Catholicism within the Church. Prior to 1890, Methodists were very clearly potential supporters of drastic revisions to the dual school system. When the argument was made that Manitoba should adopt national schools, the Church very quickly put itself on record as being in favour. The Methodists seemed content for the most part to allow the Greenway Government to defend the national schools but when a serious challenge emerged, that of remedialism, the Church took a very active role. In the final analysis, although the Methodists spent a great deal of time talking about education in Manitoba between 1868 and 1896, they spent very little time thinking about it and policy on education was simply an extension of their restricted social policy.

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Tribune, November 21, 1896.

## Chapter V

### THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Church of England's involvement with primary education in what was to become the Province of Manitoba began with the first parish school established by Reverend John West in 1822. West, a chaplain for the Hudson's Bay Company and a missionary for the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) in England, was the first Anglican clergyman to be stationed in Rupert's Land and he brought with him the first Anglican teacher, George Harbridge.<sup>202</sup> West's and subsequent Church of England parish schools had two responsibilities. These schools provided a formal European education for native children, thus assisting both in the process of converting them to Christianity and their assimilation to a "civilized" culture; and they offered a basic education for children of the Protestant settlers in the Red River colony.

The Anglican schools closely conformed to the model of education as traditionally defined by the Church of England. The Church in Rupert's Land, like the Church in England, gave equal weight to secular and religious aspects of education and this was reflected in the structure of the schools.<sup>203</sup> Like the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of

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<sup>202</sup> T. C. B. Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), p. 15.

England believed that religion was a vital part of the work of primary schools; unlike the Roman Catholics, they believed that secular and religious education need not be integrated and could be offered separately. Schools were operated by a lay teacher under the supervision of the parish clergyman with the teachers offering a broad secular education based on a traditional English curriculum.<sup>204</sup> An intensive program of religious instruction based upon the tenets of the Church of England was also provided, either by the teacher under the supervision of the clergyman or by the clergymen themselves.<sup>205</sup> Thus, the schools consciously strove for a balance between religious and secular education.

While these schools, at least in principle, conformed to the model of the Church of England, they proved to be an enormous financial burden on the Church. This strain caused the schools to lead a precarious existence and for most of the Red River era, they were inadequate by the standards of the Church of England. The schools suffered from not one

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<sup>203</sup> For a discussion of Church of England traditions in regard to education, see Dr. R. A. Hiltz, "Our Church and Education" in What Our Church Stands For: The Anglican Church in Canadian Life, W. B. Heeney (ed.) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1932) pp. 179-202.

<sup>204</sup> W. Fraser, St. John's College, Winnipeg 1866-1966: A History of the First Hundred years of the College, (Winnipeg: The Wallingford Press, 1966), pp. 7-20.

<sup>205</sup> Affidavit of Bishop Robert Machray in the case of Logan v. Winnipeg, 1891, reprinted The Manitoba School Question, J. S. Ewart, (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company, Ltd, 1894), p. 14.

but a wide variety of problems. First, there was a distinct lack of overall organization with no central authority coordinating resources among Anglican schools. Second, the Church had difficulty in obtaining and retaining qualified teachers.<sup>206</sup> Schools would often have to be taught by missionaries themselves, something for which they were not trained and which added to the already considerable demands on their time.<sup>207</sup> Most important of all, the financial support for the Anglican schools was low and unstable. Principal funding came from the C.M.S., an organization whose limited funds were earmarked for missionary work. Consequently, the C.M.S. was understandably reluctant to commit any significant funds to the education of European children. The C.M.S. funding was occasionally supplemented by small grants from the Hudson's Bay Company but these grants were irregular and were discontinued after 1851.<sup>208</sup> Finally, fees from parents, with the exception of the schools aimed at the elite of the community, supported only a small percentage of the cost; there was no tradition within the Anglican community of the Colony for local financial

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<sup>206</sup> K. Wilson, "The Development of Education in Manitoba," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Michigan State University, 1967, pp. 91-92.

<sup>207</sup> Report of the Superintendent of Protestant Schools in the Province of Manitoba for 1871, Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba, 35 Victoria, 1872, Appendix 17, pp. XLVI - LXIII. p. LII; see also, Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land (RLA), PRL-84-7, Robert Machray Papers, Machray to Governor MacTavish, March 27, 1866.

<sup>208</sup> Wilson, pp. 91-92.

support of the Church and the majority of parents were simply unable to direct any significant part of their income to education.<sup>209</sup>

As a result of these problems, for the majority of the time between 1822 and 1865, the Anglican schools were inadequate for the needs of the Protestant members of the Red River community. Schools often opened and closed contingent upon the vagaries of resources. The pressure on the Church of England was alleviated somewhat in 1851 when the Presbyterian Church established its own school. However, the lack of schools remained a serious problem, and in 1865 the Church was represented by only a boarding school at St. Paul's which served the elite of the community and two or three rudimentary parish schools entirely supported by the C.M.S.<sup>210</sup>

The situation was to change dramatically in 1865 with the arrival of the "impressive and even intimidating figure"<sup>211</sup> of Robert Machray who had come to take up his duties as second Bishop of Rupert's Land, succeeding Bishop David Anderson. Machray, an able administrator, was determined to reconstruct the rather haphazard financial and administra-

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<sup>209</sup> PAM, RLA, Machray Papers, Report of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, By the Bishop and Clergy of the Red River Settlement, 1865.

<sup>210</sup> R. A. Machray, The Life of Archbishop Machray, (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1909), p. 125.

<sup>211</sup> C. B. Sissons, Church and State in Canadian Education, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1959), p. 166.

tive structures of the Diocese. Machray's background was heavily weighted toward education, starting with a childhood spent at his uncle's boarding school in Scotland, through to his university training at Aberdeen and Cambridge. Perhaps because of this, he placed a great deal of emphasis on the duty of the Church to establish and maintain effective schools. As he said at the 1867 Diocesan Synod "Next to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments come the Office of educating the young so that they may receive a sound and religious education."<sup>212</sup>

One of Machray's first acts was to call a meeting of the Clergy of the Diocese in order to assess problems and to set priorities.<sup>213</sup> The resulting report noted the poor state of education and discussed the lack of local financial support. The report concluded that the primary schools had to be expanded to meet the needs of the community and that the cost of running the schools, as well as a wide variety of other Diocesan functions, would have to be transferred to a newly created settlement fund (as opposed to the missionary fund) which would be supported by the local Church membership. The settlement fund would be the financial base for all Church activities directed towards the European population while the missionary fund provided resources for all Church activities aimed at converting and supporting Chris-

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<sup>212</sup> PAM, RLA, PRL-84-37, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the Second Conference of Clergy and Lay Delegates in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, 1867, p. 15.

<sup>213</sup> Report of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, 1865.

tianity amongst the native population. Thus, for the first time, local Anglicans would be responsible for supporting their own Church related institutions, although missionary activities would still be mainly supported from England.

The necessity for this financial shift was not discussed in the 1865 report. Before leaving England, Machray had been informed by the C.M.S. that "the Schools and all other expenses, except the salaries of European Clergy must fall upon the Settlement Fund."<sup>214</sup> In other words, the C.M.S. refused to pay any longer for the schools for European settlers making it necessary to raise the money locally. Machray convinced them to withdraw their funds gradually at the rate of one-fifth per year for five years.<sup>215</sup> At the end of the five years, either the Diocese would have raised enough money, the less efficient schools would have to be closed or providence would play a part in providing other means to pay for them. Thus, Machray would have a chance to maintain services while creating a local financial base for the Church.

The most significant change effected in order to provide a locally responsible Church was the creation of a Diocesan Synod. The formation of the Synod in 1866, transferred a significant amount of power over local policy (although by

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<sup>214</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the First Conference of Clergy and Lay Delegates from Parishes in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, 1866, p. 11.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, Report of 1867 Diocesan Synod.

no means all) from the Bishop and clergy alone to a voting body of clergy and laity presided over by the Bishop. This resulted in a feeling of control and participation among the laity thereby contributing to a greater sense of financial responsibility.

The new school system had ambitious objectives. A school was to be established in each parish under the control of the vestry and to be paid for by public subscription.<sup>216</sup> In 1867 a plan was developed, although never implemented, to create the position of Central School Inspector to ensure the efficiency of the schools.<sup>217</sup> On the surface the new school system was quickly successful. At the 1867 Synod, Machray reported:

I rejoice to say that there has been during the last half-year a full opportunity for learning the elements of education - reading, writing, and arithmetic - from the extreme end of the Indian Settlement up to Westbourne with the single exception of the small parish of St. Margaret's at the High Bluff. And in that parish a very creditable subscription was promised towards the salary of a Master, so that I trust by another year even that blank may be supplied.<sup>218</sup>

Although Machray was initially optimistic about the financial support for the schools, it was clear from early on that there would be no easy solutions for the problem. The plan was that the schools would be run on parental fees and contributions which left the gradually declining C.M.S.

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid, Report of 1866 Diocesan Synod.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, Report of 1867 Diocesan Synod.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

contributions for use in building a capital fund.<sup>219</sup> However, in 1867, eight of the fourteen schools were still wholly supported by the C.M.S. Machray warned that they had only five years to place the schools under financial control but he expressed the belief that "if our people go on as they have begun there will be no difficulty."<sup>220</sup>

Machray's optimism proved to be unfounded. Although the number of schools expanded to sixteen by 1869, they continued to be plagued by operational and financial problems. There was still a critical shortage of teachers and the required financial base failed to materialize. It became obvious that the Bishop and his Church had taken on an all but impossible task.

The final blows to the Church of England parish school system were the events of 1869-1870. First, the seizure of Fort Garry by Riel's forces seriously disrupted the finances of the Church by blocking its financial lines to England.<sup>221</sup> Second, the transfer of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company to Canada threw into doubt Church ownership of several key plots of land. As well, a dispute erupted over the administration of the Leith Fund, a trust fund established by the bequest of a deceased employee for the use of the

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>221</sup> PAM, MG 7 B2, Archives of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) on microfilm, R. A. Machray to [H. Venn], December 17, 1869 and January 1, 1870. See also Report of the Protestant Superintendent of Education, 1871, pp. I-II.

Bishop of Rupert's Land. This precipitated a struggle between the Church and the Company that would last several years.<sup>222</sup> In 1870, given the financial situation of the Manitoba Anglicans, maintaining the schools deteriorated from a difficult situation into an impossible burden. It was quite clear that unless a new source of funding was found soon or conditions in the new Province changed dramatically, there was very little doubt that the Church of England would have to close most of its schools.

The solution came with the creation of the Board of Education of the new province of Manitoba. The division of the dual school system along religious lines, although Anglicans felt it gave an advantage to their old rivals of the Roman Catholic Church, satisfied the Church of England since it perpetuated the link between religion and education that had existed in the Red River era.<sup>223</sup> The structure of the Board was such that control rested in the hands of clergy and lay persons selected on the basis of religious affiliation, suggesting that there would be little difficulty agreeing on an acceptable minimum of religious instruction in the schools. More importantly, the financial burden would be lifted from

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<sup>222</sup> PAM, RLA, Machray Papers, File Boon 2054, 2504, Machray, Robert, for correspondence between Machray and Hudson's Bay Company officials concerning the dispute.

<sup>223</sup> Machray Affidavit, p. 15. Machray certainly had some say in the developments of the new Board. His biographer recorded that the new Government asked him to postpone a planned trip to England in the winter of 1870-1871 partly so that they could consult with him on matters of education. R. A. Machray, p. 215.

the Church of England and transferred to the much stronger tax supported Provincial Government. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglicans did not feel that strictly denominational teaching was necessary. Although the parish school system was preferable to the Church of England, given practical conditions, the dual school system was an adequate substitute. For these reasons, the constitutional protection of the Manitoba Act which guaranteed the continuation of rights to existing forms of education was waived, and the Anglican schools were transferred to the Government to form the majority of schools in the Protestant section of the School Board. Only one elite boarding school, St. John's College School, was retained by the Church.<sup>224</sup>

The agreement the Anglicans hoped to achieve on religious instruction never materialized. As previously discussed, the changes occurring in Manitoba produced a new opposition to the close connection between church and education and to religious instruction in the schools. The Protestant Board of Education, after what the Superintendent Reverend William Cyprian Pinkham termed "mature deliberation"<sup>225</sup> decided that there would be no distinctive religious education, and all that would be allowed was the reading of designated scripture passages and prayers at the opening and closing of the

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<sup>224</sup> W. Fraser, St. John's College, Winnipeg 1866-1966: A History of the First Hundred Years of the College, (Winnipeg: The Wallingford Press, 1966), p. 32.

<sup>225</sup> Report of the Protestant Superintendent of Education, 1871, p. LIV.

school.<sup>226</sup> This was further supplemented by a requirement for teachers "to observe and to impress upon the pupils the principles and morals of the Christian religion."<sup>227</sup> The system allowed for no instruction in the Bible and did not give the students any interpretation of the prayers they recited. These provisions did not meet the minimum standards desired by the Church of England since these were mere religious exercises involving only memorization and repetition and did not constitute any actual religious instruction. Machray's frustration with the new system was vented in his charge to the 1877 Diocesan Synod:

It is with me a matter of regret that it seems so difficult to maintain in our Protestant Schools the giving of a religious education. If the leading Protestant denominations were unable to accept the same translation of the Bible, or if they differed from each other on the essential truths of the Apostles' Creed, then it might be hopeless to come to any understanding. But it is not so. I acknowledge in these days the first importance of a good secular education, and it is perfectly impossible for any separate Protestant denomination to undertake the work of efficiently supplying primary education in its parishes . . . But I make these remarks because I see no necessity for our Protestant schools being deprived of the precious privilege of religious teaching.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid, p. LIV. Archdeacon Pinkham, a future bishop of the Diocese of Saskatchewan and Calgary, was not in agreement with his Church on the need for religious instruction in the schools. Although he did not publicly press the point his sympathies lay with a single, secular, English school system. See Pinkham's autobiography, PAM, MG 7 B8, W. C. Pinkham papers, on microfilm.

<sup>227</sup> S. E. Lang, "History of Education in Manitoba," reprinted in The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights, L. C. Clark (ed.) (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1968), p. 15.

<sup>228</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the 1877 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, p. 4.

Despite what the Anglicans perceived as serious flaws, they continued to support the existence of the dual school system. The Church made no attempts to change or restructure the school board. The Church did not openly criticize the dual school system, but actually defended it from the attacks of their fellow Protestants.

As noted in the first chapter, Machray combined with Reverend John Black of the Presbyterians to block the last wave of the 1873-1877 attacks of the Ontario group.<sup>229</sup> While this may seem somewhat paradoxical, it actually made sense from the Anglican perspective. There were no acceptable alternatives to the existing school system. As Machray noted in his 1877 address, the Church of England was in no financial position to operate an efficient primary school system.<sup>230</sup> It was also unlikely that the extra financial strain of an independent Anglican school system would have been accepted by the laity.<sup>231</sup> Equally important was the fact that the most determined critics of the school board were advocating a completely secular school system. Thus, reopening any discussion about the system would have more

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<sup>229</sup> See pp. 34-35; See also Report of the 1877 Diocesan Synod.

<sup>230</sup> Report of the 1877 Diocesan Synod.

<sup>231</sup> As illustration it should be noted that the Church had sufficient problems in maintaining the three purely Anglican educational institutions in the Province: St. John's College; St. John's College School; and St. John's Ladies College. See PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the 1886 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

likely weakened rather than strengthened the role of religion in the school system. The anti-Roman Catholic tone of the 1875-1877 struggle did touch a responsive chord among some of the Anglican clergy in what was an overwhelmingly evangelical diocese. However, it was not considered to be worth accepting a completely secular school system in order to remove a "denominational advantage" for the Roman Catholics. This certainly did not make these anti-Catholic Anglicans great admirers of the system but in comparison to a secular school system, the existing structure was preferable. For those Anglicans who did feel strongly opposed to the existing system, there was virtually no opportunity to dissent from the Church's view, since the issue of education was not discussed at Synod between 1877-1888.

Not all of the Anglican reasons for supporting the dual school system involved fear of change. The schools provided an increasingly competent secular education to the growing Protestant population of the Province at no cost to the Church. The Anglican clergy, through their positions on the school board, were given an important role in determining development of all Protestant children, not just Anglicans, in the Province. Machray, in particular, through his position as chairman of the Protestant section of the school board from 1871-1890, enjoyed considerable influence over the development of education, as well as adding significantly to his prestige.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Machray, p. 272.

Although the Anglicans were frustrated with the inadequacies of the school system, the blame for the lack of religious instruction in the schools was placed not on the system of education but on the men the Provincial Government had appointed to the Board. Referring to this point in his address to the 1889 Synod, Machray stated:

I have been all along aware that several of the members did not share my views - at one time I would have been in a small minority. But I have always regarded an attitude unfriendly to religious teaching in the schools for our children as so unnatural for religious men, that I have hoped for the gradual overcoming of the prejudices so that a more satisfactory system might be introduced.<sup>233</sup>

This faith in the system was reinforced by apparent progress towards the adoption of religious instruction in the schools. In 1880, despite public criticism and the opposition of Reverend James Robertson, the Protestant Board passed a resolution accepting in principle the need for religious instruction.<sup>234</sup> A committee representing the Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians was created to discuss means of implementing the resolution.<sup>235</sup> The committee reported infrequently over the next five years. However, in November of 1885 the Board, acting on a report from the com-

<sup>233</sup> Introduction to the pamphlet, "Address Delivered by the Bishop of Rupert's Land Before the Anglican Synod December 1889," reprinted in Ewart, p. 161.

<sup>234</sup> PAM, RG 19 A1, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Protestant Section of the Board of Education, May 5, 1880. See also Manitoba Free Press, February 5, 10 and May 7, 8, 11, 17, 26, 1880.

<sup>235</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Protestant Section of the Board of Education, May 5, 1880.

mittee, reached an agreement that required all students to possess a Bible and to read scripture from a designated list of passages. In addition, all students past the level of Standard III would have to be able to recite from memory the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed. One half-hour a day could be set aside for memorization and the learning of manners and morals. The Board also agreed to investigate the possibility of developing a booklet of standard religious instruction.<sup>236</sup> Despite the fact that the new regulations were only more complicated religious exercises, their adoption and the continuing negotiations on the Board satisfied the clergy of the Church of England that the dual school system was the most efficient way of achieving adequate religious instruction in the schools.

The dual school system was therefore an imperfect but acceptable compromise to the Church of England. While it placed obstacles in the way of achieving the desired minimum of religious education in the schools, the dual school system was felt to be flexible enough that with patience and effort these goals could be reached. Despite the difficulties experienced with the other Protestant denominations and the "denominational advantage" that it gave to the Roman Catholic Church, it was a system that the Anglicans felt was workable.

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid, December 2, 1885.

The result of this perspective was that the Church of England assumed an air of complacency in regard to education in Manitoba during the 1880's.<sup>237</sup> Education was not discussed at Synod nor was there any attempt to ascertain or affect the attitudes of the laity with respect to the proper functioning of the public schools. Like the Presbyterian Church, the Church of England was undergoing some significant changes as a result of the massive influx of coreligionists from Ontario. Unlike the Presbyterians, these changes affected the laity to a far greater degree than the clergy. The Church of England in Manitoba was directly subordinate to the Church in England rather than to Ontario.<sup>238</sup> In addition, outside funding continued to come mainly from Britain rather than from Eastern Canada.<sup>239</sup> As a result, the clergy of the Diocese, for the most part, had come directly from England or were educated within the Diocese of Rupert's Land.<sup>240</sup> Because of this, the clergy of the Church of England was mainly composed of men who had been raised in societies where the role of the Church in education was still strongly supported. The laity, on the other hand, had migrated mainly from Ontario where the influence of the

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<sup>237</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, contains the reports of the various Synods during this period.

<sup>238</sup> Boon, pp.90-118.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, pp. 254-255.

<sup>240</sup> See D. A. Nock, "Patriotism and Patriarchs: Anglican Archbishops and Canadianization," Canadian Ethnic Studies, Vol. XIV, No. 3, 1982, pp. 79-94 for a discussion of the impact of a British born clergy on the Canadian Church.

Church over education had been gradually limited. Among the incoming group of prominent Anglican laity were a number of strong supporters of national schools and the political control of education.<sup>241</sup> Thus, the Church of England was basing its policy towards education on two mistaken assumptions. First that appropriate changes in the delivery of education could be attained by simply waiting patiently for the composition of the Protestant Board of Education to change to one more favourable to the Anglican viewpoint. The other belief was that the laity of the Church of England was in support of Church policy on education. The controversy surrounding the Manitoba School Question was to reveal just how false these assumptions were.

J. R. Miller has noted that prior to the Manitoba School Question, there were a series of criticisms levelled at the dual school system as part of the increasing signs of intolerance for the rights of the Roman Catholic minority.<sup>242</sup> Taken individually, none of these events were of great note but collectively, they were signs of a growing threat to the dual school system. Yet at no time did the Church of England comment upon these criticisms nor was any action taken.

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<sup>241</sup> For a study of one prominent lay Anglican who worked diligently for national schools in western Canadian, see N. G. McDonald, "D. J. Goggin: Promoter of National Schools" in Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West, D. C. Jones, N. M. Sheehan and R. M. Stamp, (eds.), (Calgary, Detselig Enterprises, Ltd., 1979) pp. 14-28.

<sup>242</sup> J. R. Miller, "D'Alton McCarthy, Equal Rights and the Origins of the Manitoba School Question," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIV, No. 4, 1973, pp. 369-392.

This apparent disinterest becomes even more striking when it is noted that one of the principal dissidents was himself an Anglican clergyman. The Reverend J. J. Roy, Orangeman and prominent anti-Roman Catholic agitator, repeatedly attacked the existence of the dual school system as part of his campaign against French and Roman Catholic rights.<sup>243</sup> Roy's comments elicited no response from his Church even though his criticisms of the dual school system ran counter to stated Church policy. It seems likely that the reason for the Church's apparent inactivity was not due to a lack of awareness of these issues but rather from a lack of inclination to engage in needless controversies.

The first indication of the proposed changes to the school system which aroused the attention of the Church of England were the speeches of D'Alton McCarthy and Joseph Martin at Portage La Prairie on August 5, 1889. McCarthy's speech alone would have raised little concern in the Church of England. Anglicans in the Diocese of Rupert's Land were strongly evangelical and had a long history of rivalry with the Roman Catholic Church. As such, McCarthy's anti-French, anti-Roman Catholic attack on the Jesuit Estates Act and on minority rights would have been acceptable to many Anglicans, tolerable to many more, and offensive to only a few. Martin's speech, however, apparently pledged the Greenway Government to the abolition of both the official status of French and of the dual school system to be replaced with a

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid, p. 384-387.

purely secular national school system. Martin's promised changes were a threat not only to the traditional Roman Catholic perspective on the proper functioning of education but also to that of the Church of England.

There could be no equivocation in the policy of the Church of England towards secular schools. Only one year earlier, in 1886, the Lambeth Conference, the meeting of the representatives of the Church of England worldwide, had reasserted the Church's traditional doctrine on the importance of religious instruction as a part of primary education. The Conference report stated:

Teachers in Elementary schools ought to be regarded as an indispensable part of the pastoral work of a Parish Priest; and the moral and practical lessons from the Bible ought to be enforced by constant reference to the sanctions, and to the illustrations of doctrine and discipline belonging to them, to be found in the same Holy Scripture.<sup>244</sup>

Since Martin's speech was perceived to be Government policy, the Church of England's response had to be in the form of a resolution from the Diocesan Synod. In his address to the Synod in October of 1889, Machray displayed considerable anger at the proposed changes to the school system.<sup>245</sup> He rejected the idea of a completely secular school system, arguing that to remove religion from the schools would lead to the disintegration of Manitoba society. He informed the

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<sup>244</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the 1888 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

<sup>245</sup> Machray 1889 Address in Ewart, pp. 160-169.

Synod that "We, indeed, beloved brethren, strike at the whole edifice of our morality when we remove this foundation - thus saith the Lord."<sup>246</sup> He cited the United States, France and the Australian Colony of Victoria as examples of places that had secularized their schools and were on their way to moral disintegration.

Machray was willing to admit there were some grounds for change in the schools of Manitoba. Like the supporters of the national schools, he believed that the Roman Catholics had special privileges under the existing system and that those privileges had been abused. It was his belief that "in being enabled to supply the primary education of its [the Roman Catholic Church] members, it has been helped to give cheaply a higher education that has drawn to it Protestant children, more particularly girls."<sup>247</sup> He further argued that the Government had a right to ensure that minimum standards of secular education were maintained and even if existing denominational schools were retained or new ones created, a system of Government inspectors, independent of the sponsoring church, should be established.

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid, p. 166.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, p. 162. This was a common complaint among Protestant leaders. Machray believed that the attraction of a cheaper education at the Roman Catholic girl's schools was responsible for the financial difficulties of St. John's Ladies College. However, the ability of the Roman Catholic schools to operate cheaply and efficiently rested on the structure of the Church and not on any undue public subsidy.

Machray's solution to the problem was to press for the adoption of the system in use in London where there was one central Board of Education which offered non-sectarian religious instruction acceptable to both Protestants and Roman Catholics. Machray further argued that if the Roman Catholics were not satisfied with such a system then it would be better if they were allowed to continue to operate their own schools rather than force everyone into a secular school system. Machray strongly hinted that if the schools were to be established on the line that Martin described, then, Anglicans would be called upon to re-establish the parish school system abandoned in 1871.

The Synod supported Machray's strong stand on the need for religious instruction in the schools. His address to Synod was ordered printed and read from every pulpit in the Diocese. However, discussion following the address revealed that opinion within the Church was not as united as Machray might have hoped or presumed. The issue of whether or not the Church was prepared to return to the parish schools was sidestepped and was noticeably absent from the discussion following Machray's address.<sup>248</sup> Support for the Bishop's proposed solutions was varied. Some of the clergy wholeheartedly endorsed them. Still more clergymen, however, were torn between their loyalty to Church doctrine and their

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<sup>248</sup> While there is a brief summary of the 1889 Synod in the Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land 1889 available in PAM, RLA, the debate is best seen by examining newspaper accounts of the Synod. See Manitoba Free Press, October 30-31, 1889.

approval of the social aims of the new school system. Led by Canon J. D. O'Meara, their dislike of secular schools was only slightly greater than their dislike of Roman Catholic schools. O'Meara, for example, vehemently denounced what he saw as the abuses of the dual school system by the Roman Catholic Church but in the end acknowledged that in comparison to completely secular schools, the existing one "was the lesser of two evils."<sup>249</sup> More seriously, the laity at Synod gave only lukewarm support, with many arguing that religious instruction was valuable but that it was not a necessity if it interfered with the more important social functions of the national schools. The final result of the discussion, beyond the decision to print and distribute Machray's address, was that the Synod convened a committee to confer with other religious bodies on ways to achieve religious instruction in the national schools.

The Church of England had great hopes that their criticisms, coupled with similar arguments from Reverend J. M. King of the Presbyterian Church, would force the Government to include provisions for religious instruction in any changes to the school system. They were disappointed. The Public Schools Act of 1890, which created Manitoba's national school system, was only a partial victory. It contained provisions only for religious exercises which would be set

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<sup>249</sup> St. John's College Archives (S.J.C.), J. D. O'Meara, "The School Question," St. John's College Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 23, November 1889, p. 347.

by the Advisory Board.<sup>250</sup> These exercises were limited by law to just before the closing hour in the afternoon, although they could be withheld entirely at the option of the District trustees and parents were allowed to absent their children if it was against their conscience.

Bishop Machray believed that the national school system was simply one part of three attacks by what he termed a "secular party," which were attempting to limit the role of religious denominations in Manitoba society.<sup>251</sup> Apart from the secularization of the primary schools, he was also concerned about the proposed establishment of a secular college within the University of Manitoba which could compete with and, due to its superior financial backing, threaten the very existence of the religious colleges.<sup>252</sup> Finally, he and other members of the clergy were outraged by the Government's attempts to abolish the exemption from taxation enjoyed by Manitoba religious denominations.<sup>253</sup> This last point so enraged the Anglican clergy that Canon (later Arch-

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<sup>250</sup> Lang, p. 17.

<sup>251</sup> PAM, CMS, Machray to Reverend F. E. [Wigram], July 16, 1891.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. See also Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface (Roman Catholic) (AASB), Bishop Machray to Reverend Father Long, October 2, 1889. See also L. G. Thomas "The Church of England and Higher Education in the Prairie West Before 1914," Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, Vol. III, No. 1, 1956, p. 5.

<sup>253</sup> Manitoba Free Press, October 29, 1890. See also "Church Taxation," Manitoba Free Press, March 10, 1890. See also St. John's College Magazine, Vol. VI, No. 25, March 1890, pp. 416-417.

bishop) S. P. Matheson asked a local Conservative organizer, W. B. Scarth, if "there was no way of getting up a conservative paper saying the Bishop and clergy who had formerly voted for Grit and Tory [irrespective] of politics were now all Tory."<sup>254</sup>

Despite public opposition to the national schools, Bishop Machray was the unanimous choice of the University of Manitoba Council to be its representative on the new Advisory Board of Education. His initial reaction was to refuse this appointment. However, under pressure to accept, he changed his mind believing that he might be able to exert influence for good as a member of the Board. He intended to resign if no progress was made.<sup>255</sup> Pessimistically, he wrote to a friend with the C.M.S. that "whether there will be such religious instruction etc. allowed by the Board as to allow me to remain on it remains to be seen."<sup>256</sup> It was a serious mistake on Machray's part to accept a position on the Board and eventually its chairmanship, since he was tacitly giving support to the new system, diluting the impact of his criticisms. This danger was apparent to Archbishop Taché who politely refused a position on the Advisory Board when it

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<sup>254</sup> PAM, MG 4 B1, Sir John A. Macdonald Papers, on microfilm, W. B. Scarth to Macdonald, April 10, 1890.

<sup>255</sup> PAM, CMS, Machray to [Wigram], July 16, 1891.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. See also PAM, MG 7 A3, Archbishop S. P. Matheson Collection, D. J. Goggins to Matheson, May 7, 1890 for a letter which illustrates some of the pressure being applied to Machray to accept the position.

was offered by Greenway.<sup>257</sup>

The Church of England believed the religious exercises set by the Advisory Board failed to meet the minimum standard of religious instruction in the schools. Although the quantity of religious exercises was not appreciably less than had been offered by the old Protestant section of the dual Board, the new system failed to provide any hope that more religious instruction could be instituted in the future. The fact that the District trustees could withhold religious instruction in their areas was also a grave concern for the Church since Anglican children within these districts could be forced to attend purely secular schools.<sup>258</sup> Concerned Anglicans felt that the Government, which had already demonstrated a secular bent, would dominate the Advisory Board, limiting the value of the few concessions the Church felt it had won.<sup>259</sup> In addition, inherent in the dual school system had been the relationship between religious denominations and education, something which did not hold true for the Advisory Board. The old Board had had its representatives selected on the basis of denominational affiliation. This resulted in a disproportionate number of clergymen on the Board. Although some

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<sup>257</sup> AASB, Archbishop Taché to Thomas Greenway, April 26, 1890.

<sup>258</sup> "Extracts on Primary Education from the Address of the Bishop of Rupert's Land to the Synod of the Diocese," January, 1893, reprinted in Ewart, pp. 170-178. p. 171.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

clergymen did sit on the Advisory Board, they were far fewer in number and proportion than on the dual school board. Thus, the change in the structure of the school system seriously reduced the influence of the clergy of all denominations over education.

While opposed to the new school system, and believing it to be unacceptable in its existing form, the Church of England was unable to agree on any one policy for change or even what degree of change was required. Philosophically, the Church was united in its stand against the complete secularization of the schools. However, the Synod could find no common ground on which to base any concrete actions. The Church was divided about what changes were necessary and what options should be pressed. The result of this was that, despite a number of other important issues, discussion of the Manitoba School Question dominated the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land from 1889- 1896.<sup>260</sup>

The most prominent spokesman for the Church was Bishop Machray, who viewed the schools as irreplaceable for the purpose of teaching morality and religion to the children of the Province. He continued the stand he had taken at the 1889 Synod, arguing that while a strong secular education was indispensable in the world of the 1890's, it was danger-

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<sup>260</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, contains the proceedings of the various meetings of the Diocesan Synods concerning the period in question. Since these are only summaries, the only way to gain an accurate appreciation of the debates is to read the corresponding accounts in the Manitoba Free Press.

ous when not accompanied by a sound training in morality and religion. After all, he wrote "education is not simply the imparting of knowledge, though as much of this as is consistent with the real training of the mind is well, but education is above all the inculcating of sound principles of life, and the strengthening of the mental powers and conception."<sup>261</sup> Machray rejected arguments that religious instruction could and should be left to the Church and to the home since many children received no religious training from either source and would thus grow up ignorant of God and morality. As well, he argued that the separation of religion from the schools would lead to a weakening of respect for both the importance of Scripture and of God.

Machray's attitude toward Roman Catholics and denominational schools was somewhat contradictory. Like most evangelical Anglicans, he had a dubious view of Roman Catholics.<sup>262</sup> At the same time he had a long and successful working relationship with Archbishop Taché and counted Taché among his close friends.<sup>263</sup> Machray had nothing against sep-

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<sup>261</sup> PAM, RLA, Report of the 1893 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

<sup>262</sup> Machray was quite capable of publicly chastizing the Roman Catholic Church in general for a poor record with its primary schools, as he did in 1893 (See Ewart, p.170), while privately assuring Archbishop Taché that he had no criticisms of the running of the Roman Catholic section of the Dual School system. See AASB, Machray to Taché, Oct. 31, 1890.

<sup>263</sup> Machray, pp. 306-307. See PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the 1894 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land for Machray's tribute to Taché following his death. See also AASB, Archbishop Machray to Rever-

arate denominational schools and he felt they had worked well in Britain.<sup>264</sup> However, he believed that Manitoba had too small a population to support separate schools comfortably for all who wanted them and therefore the Province should adopt a program of non-denominational religious instruction along the lines of the board schools in London. If the Roman Catholics could not be convinced to accept this then the dual school system should be retained, since it was better that the Roman Catholics receive special considerations than to have all students deprived of religious instruction.<sup>265</sup>

Since Machray had little faith that either of these two solutions would be adopted, he began to threaten a return to an Anglican parish school system shortly after the Government adopted the Public Schools Act of 1890.<sup>266</sup> He doubted that satisfactory changes would be forthcoming in the national schools and feared that if the Federal Government did intervene it would be to return the right to denominational schools only to Roman Catholics, and Anglican children would be forced to attend purely secular schools.<sup>267</sup> At

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end Father Allard, June 23, 1894. See also AASB for a series of letters between Machray and Taché from 1870 to 1894.

<sup>264</sup> Report of the 1893 Diocesan Synod.

<sup>265</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the 1890 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

the 1890 Diocesan Synod, Machray said that if satisfactory changes were not made then the Church of England would have to re-establish parish schools as soon as it was able. However, he argued that any denominational school should be subject to independent supervision by the Government in respect to secular education.<sup>268</sup> Machray felt that this would rectify what he claimed were the defects in the Roman Catholic schools of the dual school system.

Although Machray had some clear support at Synod, most of the clergy were not quite as sure about their attitudes toward the Manitoba School Question. Many agreed with both Machray and Church tradition that religious instruction was vital in the schools in order to ensure the proper moral and religious development of the students. At the same time, their own anti-Roman Catholic and anti-minority sentiments caused them to support the aim of a British and Protestant province implicit in the demand for a national school system. This dichotomy, disapproving of the schools for being secular yet approving of them for their social agenda, put the clergy into an anomalous position. They couldn't approve of the national schools yet they were uncomfortable with opposing them. There was, indeed, a great deal of resentment that the two issues had been linked together by the Government. Canon S. P. Matheson summed up this position at the 1889 Synod when he said, "the Proposal to rob

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<sup>268</sup> Manitoba Free Press, October 29, 1890. See also AASB, Taché to Machray, October 29, 1890 and Machray to Taché, October 31, 1890.

the children of religious instruction had been brought before the country in a very specious inviting way, by being allied with a question on which strong feelings were held by many, that of abolishing separate schools [sic]."<sup>269</sup>

This dichotomy led the clergy to reject both sides in the mainstream of the debate. They refused attempts to have the Synod endorse the national schools yet attempted to make clear that they were not defending the Roman Catholics when they did so. The dilemma was a difficult one but when pressed they would grudgingly admit a preference for a return to the dual school system rather than a continuance of the "Godless schools" of the national school system.<sup>270</sup>

In order to achieve what the clergy saw as the optimum in education, they, under the leadership of Canon O'Meara, actively advocated revisions to the national school system that would allow for non-denominational religious instruction. O'Meara, in particular, devoted a great deal of his time after 1889 to collecting information, participating in debates, heading committees and generally acting as one of the Church's spokesmen on the issue of religious instruction.<sup>271</sup> O'Meara, a staunch evangelical originally from

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<sup>269</sup> Manitoba Free Press, October 31, 1889.

<sup>270</sup> See PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the Proceedings of the 1895 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

<sup>271</sup> For examples of O'Meara's activities, see reports of the various Synods. See also PAM, Matheson Papers for copies of letters written and received by O'Meara in his attempt to collect information on religious instruction

Ontario, made no secret of his dislike for Roman Catholicism and his desire for a British and Protestant character for the Province. However, he made it quite clear that absorbing the minority was not worth the price of abandoning even the possibility of religious instruction in the schools. O'Meara and the rest of the clergy were prepared to go only so far for a solution to the problem. They were embarrassed by Machray's repeated threats to return to a parish schools system, a solution that was too expensive and difficult to be contemplated. However, respect for Machray was such that the clergy did not challenge him on this directly. Instead, his statements were ignored and discussion centred on supporting those points in the Bishop's annual addresses with which the clergy agreed.

This evasion worked well until 1895 when O'Meara was publicly challenged on just what the Church's policy was in regard to Anglican denominational schools. On April 29, 1895, O'Meara participated in a debate on the School Question held at the Central Congregational Church in Winnipeg.<sup>272</sup> Also participating in the debate were J. S. Ewart, lawyer for the Roman Catholic Church, Reverend Hugh Pedley of the Congregational Church, and Reverend Alexander Grant of the Baptist Church. Almost from the beginning of the debate, Grant and Ewart began a heated argument on what the impact of a return to the dual school system would have on

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in other school systems.

<sup>272</sup> Manitoba Free Press, April 30, 1895.

Manitoba. Grant, an ardent supporter of the complete secularization of the school system, employed one of the standard arguments used by the opponents of denominational schools; that if Roman Catholic rights were restored, then all denominations would demand provincially funded denominational schools. Ewart ridiculed the idea, responding that no other denomination had expressed such an interest. Grant replied that Machray had pledged the Church of England to re-establish its parish schools system. O'Meara immediately stated that Archbishop Machray had no intention of developing separate Anglican schools, "nor was this the view of the Synod of Rupert's Land which was the supreme authority of the Church of England in this country."<sup>273</sup> Three days after the debate, Grant wrote a letter to the Free Press claiming that O'Meara had confused the issue and accused him of lying.<sup>274</sup> On July 1, 1895, O'Meara replied in the same fashion, accusing Grant of misrepresenting what he had said at the debate.<sup>275</sup> O'Meara wrote that the Church of England's position was that it was dissatisfied with the level of religious instruction in the public schools but in no way wanted to break up the national school system. Two days later, a Free Press editorial placed sections of O'Meara's letter beside a section of Machray's address to the 1895 Synod in which he once again called for the re-establishment

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., May 3, 1895.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., July 1, 1895

of the Church of England parish school system. O'Meara, publicly embarrassed, was unable to muster a reply and the argument was allowed to lapse without response.

Despite their differences the Bishop and clergy of the Church of England were able to find common ground to work on the school question. The Anglicans used all of the resources available to the Church in an attempt to achieve some modification of the school system. They preached from their pulpits, wrote letters to newspapers and to politicians, spoke at length to the Synod and wrote editorials in Church newspapers and magazines stressing the need for religious instruction in the schools.<sup>276</sup> Machray and his clergymen were successful at making the displeasure of the Church known and they forced politicians and others to at least take note of Anglican displeasure when making decisions. The Winnipeg Tribune, a strong supporter of secular schools, was careful to rebuke the Church repeatedly over the eight years of the school question.<sup>277</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Schultz felt that the opposition expressed by the Church of England would have a serious impact on the Greenway Government and would force them to review the school legislation.<sup>278</sup> Even

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<sup>276</sup> For example, PAM, CMS, Rupert's Land Gleaner, Vol. I, No. 4, September 1890. See also "Religion in the Schools," St. John's College Journal, Vol. 8, No. 46, December 1892. See also submission by Archbishop Machray to Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell, House of Commons Sessional Papers, 58 Victoria 1895, No. 206, Vol. XXVIII, No. 10, p. 333.

<sup>277</sup> For example, see Winnipeg Tribune, April 19, 1895.

<sup>278</sup> PAM, Macdonald Papers, Sir J. C. Schultz to Macdonald,

Federal politicians were not unaware of the potential problem of Anglican displeasure. In a letter from G. W. Stephens in 1893, Wilfrid Laurier was warned that:

Many of our friends say what about the Manitoba question. Our enemies have not yet stated openly that the Liberal party will yield to the Ecclesiastics Roman Catholics and Church of England both of whom are on the warpath against godless schools.<sup>279</sup>

While Bishop Machray and his clergy had areas of disagreement, it was only on the degree of change required in the schools. By far, the more serious split in the Church was between those who believed that religious instruction was more important than national schools, and those who viewed religious instruction in the schools as less important than the value of the national schools as a tool for the assimilation of minorities. The supporters of this latter position can be divided into two groups. The first was a small body of virulent anti-Roman Catholic agitators led by the Reverend J. J. Roy. The second and more significant group, mainly consisted of the Anglican laity.

As mentioned previously, Reverend J. J. Roy had been engaged in a campaign against the Roman Catholic Church for several years preceding the eruption of the school question. Roy, incumbent of St. George's Parish, was a rather pathetic

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November 5, 1889. See also PAM, MG 12 E1, Sir J. C. Schultz Papers, Schultz to Sir John Thompson, February 18, 1894.

<sup>279</sup> PAM, MG 4 B4, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Papers, on microfilm, G. W. Stephens to Laurier, October 7, 1893.

figure. A member of a family of evangelical converts from Roman Catholicism, he viciously attacked the Roman Catholic Church, outdoing all but the most extreme ultra-Protestants, perhaps in a subconscious attempt to justify his family's choice.<sup>280</sup> Accompanied by a small following of fanatics, Roy attempted, unsuccessfully, to influence the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land into advocating a punitive position towards the Roman Catholic Church.

At the 1889 Synod Roy introduced perhaps the most inflammatory resolution on the Jesuit Estates Act to be discussed at a Protestant Church body in Manitoba. Seconded by W. R. Mulock, one of Roy's compatriots from the Orange Lodge, the motion read as follows:

1. Whereas, the Queen's Majesty hath the power in this, her Canadian Dominion, and is not nor ought to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction;
2. Whereas it is of vital importance to us all, both as her Majesty's subjects and as Churchmen, that the Queen's supremacy should be recognized by all her Canadian subjects and maintained in all legislative enactments [sic];
3. Whereas principles now embodied in our Canadian legislation under pressure of the Roman Hierarchy, have engendered peace and harmony;
4. Whereas, the steadily growing influence of the Roman Hierarchy over the civil domain is now giving just cause for alarm and anxiety.

Resolved: That His Lordship appoint a committee (two of whom shall be the mover and seconder) to inquire into and gather information in regard to the encroachments of the Roman Hierarchy, and to

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<sup>280</sup> Miller, p. 386; M. L. Benham, Once More into the Breach: St. George's Anglican Church, 1882-1983, (Winnipeg: St. George's Anglican Church, 1982) pp. 5-6, gives a brief and uncritical biography of Roy.

recommend suitable and practical methods of resisting most effectively said encroachments and to report at the next meeting of Synod.<sup>281</sup>

Roy's resolution touched off a storm of controversy at the Synod. Many of the delegates were unhappy with having the Synod pass a motion which denounced another church, even the Roman Catholic Church, in such strong terms. Others argued that to ignore the Jesuit Estates Act was to ignore their duty as British Protestants. The Synod became deadlocked, with some members supporting Roy's original resolution and others supporting an amendment proposed by lay delegate Lansing Lewis and seconded by Canon J. F. Coombes. The amendment would have changed Roy's resolution to read:

In these days of religious disputes the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land takes this opportunity of expressing the hope that all members of its communion will be energetic in showing to the world such a consistent line of conduct as will extend the influence of the Christian religion in that spirit of charity which is enjoined upon the followers of Christ.<sup>282</sup>

In the final analysis, although only Roy and a small group of followers accepted his extreme position, there was too much feeling that some action had to be taken on the Jesuit Estates Act for the Synod to adopt Lewis' amendment.<sup>283</sup> With Bishop Machray observing strict neutrality on the issue, the Synod reached a typically Anglican compromise. The inflammatory preamble to Roy's motion was

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<sup>281</sup> Report of the 1889 Diocesan Synod.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Manitoba Free Press, October 31, 1889.

dropped, Coombe withdrew his seconding of Lewis' amendment, and the motion was adopted by a large margin. As a result the Synod resolved to create a committee to investigate if the Roman Catholic Church was exercising undue political influence without condemning that Church for political involvement.

The 1889 Synod marked the high point of Roy's influence in the Church. In 1890 he introduced a series of motions to the Synod which, if adopted, would have had the Church adopt a severely anti-Catholic stance. Roy's motions would have re-established the committee created at the 1889 Synod as well as have the Synod adopt a five point plan for aggression against the Roman Catholic Church. The five points were: (1) to ensure that the Church of England taught only the "pure word of God;" (2) to educate the laity of the Church as to "the errors, aims and aspirations of Rome;" (3) to teach theological students to pay careful attention to the errors of "Romish Doctrine" with special attention paid to "the history of the Church at the time of the Reformation;" (4) to zealously guard against the adoption of Catholic doctrines; and, (4) most surprising of all considering the Synod had already passed a contrary motion, "the total abolition of all tax exemptions on lands and buildings in the Province."<sup>284</sup> Roy's motions met with a chilly reception. Instead of starting a vigorous discussion followed by some

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<sup>284</sup> PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Report of the 1890 Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land. See also Manitoba Free Press, October 29, 1890.

form of compromise, this time Roy was quietly convinced to withdraw his motions completely.

Roy's anti-Catholic campaign naturally included the national school issue.<sup>285</sup> Unlike his Bishop or his compatriots among the Anglican clergy, Roy had no difficulty in deciding what should be the proper response of the Church of England to the Manitoba School Question. He introduced several motions to the Synod that would have unconditionally endorsed the national school system as established in 1890. Roy made no secret that his support for national schools stemmed more from its assault on the rights of Roman Catholics than from any philosophical affinity he felt for the system. Indeed, he supported the Church's stand on the need for religious instruction in the schools but argued that it was far less important than a strong stand against the Roman Catholic Church. At the 1893 Synod he was reported to have said that "if he had the choice between a purely secular system of schools and Roman Catholic schools and Anglican schools existing side by side, he would vote for secular schools."<sup>286</sup> This scandalized the Synod and prompted one anonymous Anglican to write to the Free Press that "the Church of England has no use for a man [Roy] who will not only go out of his way, but who will inflict harm on his own Church in order to insult his fellow Christians, and to

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<sup>285</sup> See Manitoba Sun, August 24, 1889 for Roy's views on the school question.

<sup>286</sup> Manitoba Free Press, January 20, 1893.

cause similar harm to a sister in the Catholic faith."<sup>287</sup> While this writer gives perhaps more sympathy to the Roman Catholic Church than all his fellow members of Synod would be willing to accord, Manitoba Anglicans were generally embarrassed by Roy's extremism. All of his motions were defeated and he was given no role to play in the Church's attempts to modify the public school system.

Despite Roy's lack of influence, he serves a useful purpose to this study as a contrast to the much larger group, the Anglican laity, who gave strong support to the national schools. Like the Presbyterians and the Methodists, the Anglican laity believed in the utility of the national schools as agents for the assimilation of non-English minorities and for the inculcation of imperial and patriotic sentiment. They believed that the adoption of the Manitoba School Act of 1890 was crucial to the development of Manitoba.<sup>288</sup> Led by Chancellor H. M. Howell, they argued that the demands of national unity and progress for western Canada were more important than the undoubtedly laudable but not strictly necessary virtues of religious instruction in the schools. Thus, they distanced themselves from Roy's assault on Roman Catholicism by portraying the national schools as instrumental to "reform" an archaic school system. In

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> N. G. McDonald, "Canadian Nationalism and North-West Schools" in Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity, (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Ltd., 1977) pp. 75-77.

short, the difference between Roy and his small group of supporters and the bulk of the laity was that the former were obviously bigoted in their hatred of a particular group while the latter, like most of the Province, were unconsciously bigoted in their sweeping rejection of all minority rights in order to fulfill their own social agenda.

The difference between clergy and laity did not stem from any major theological division within the Church. There was no High Church-Low Church split in Rupert's Land; the Diocese was overwhelmingly evangelical and both clergy and laity were diligent in searching out overt signs of Anglo-Catholicism.<sup>289</sup> Rather, the attitudes of the laity stemmed more from secular roots. Like the Presbyterians and the Methodists, the Anglican laity by 1890 were mostly immigrants from Ontario. Also similar to Presbyterians and the Methodists, the Church of England lay representatives were solidly middle class, mostly businessmen or professionals, who possessed a strong streak of regional boosterism. They or their children were educated in schools very similar to those adopted in 1890 and they belonged to the very class which the schools were designed to serve. Arguments that an absence of religious instruction in the schools would lead to a morally bankrupt province must have seemed absurd to them since, despite the best efforts of their clergy both in

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<sup>289</sup> E. C. R. Pritchard, The Red River Settlement, A Gripping Narrative of Pioneer Days, (White Rock: White Rock Printers and Publishers Ltd., 1961), pp. 24-25; see also PAM, CMS, Machray to [Wigram], July 16, 1891.

Ontario and Manitoba, they had been educated in essentially secular schools. Even those delegates who were concerned about the religious instruction of their children were given a safety net in St. John's College School and St. John's Ladies School. The Church's private schools offered a full course of religious instruction based on the tenets of the Church of England. The existence of these private schools allowed prosperous Anglicans to arrange for a religious education for their children while advocating secular schools for other children.<sup>290</sup> Thus, for the lay representatives to the Church of England Synods, the public schools introduced in 1890 were comfortable in their familiarity, enticing in their social agenda, and non-threatening in their absence of religious instruction.

The difference of opinion between clergy and laity inevitably led to conflict both internal and external to Synod. Because of the division, with no one group dominating within Synod, official Church policy tended to follow the lowest common denominator. For the most part these debates were relatively quiet without any open hostility. Policy would be argued, motions and counter-motions presented until invariably, the motions that were passed simply expressed Anglican displeasure with the status quo and asked the Government for a program of religious instruction or at least a fuller implementation of the religious exercises already allowed in

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<sup>290</sup> See the Hayward affidavit in the Logan case, reprinted in Ewart, pp. 16-17.

the new school system.

Significantly, while the resistance of the Church of England to "godless schools" was publicly and privately noted in the society around them, Anglicans were not bound by Church authority to follow any particular method of change in the schools. As a result, the laity outside Synod could support the national schools with a clear conscience.<sup>291</sup> Even more serious for the Church, those actively working for change in the school system could not use a united Church as a political threat to influence decision makers. This was illustrated by the preamble to a letter Machray wrote to Prime Minister Bowell attempting to ensure that rights to religious instruction for Protestants as well as Roman Catholics would be included in any remedial legislation. Machray wrote:

Sir: I inclose [sic] a letter which I have thought it well to write to you for the government to explain the views held by the Church of England as expressed in its Synod. These views are, I believe, held by almost all our clergy; but, no doubt, a good many of our laity do not feel so strongly. Many are quite satisfied with our present schools and some would not object to secularized schools altogether.<sup>292</sup>

The conflict between clergy and laity precipitated one of the bleakest events in the history of the Church of England in Canada. In 1891, after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled

<sup>291</sup> See James A. Richardson, "The School Question," St. John's College Magazine, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1893, pp. 891-892.

<sup>292</sup> House of Commons Sessional Papers, 58 Victoria 1895, No. 206, Vol. XXVII, No. 10, p. 333, Machray to Bowell.

in favour of the Roman Catholics in the Barrett case, the Provincial Government felt that it needed some extra legal ammunition before arguing the case before the Privy Council. Clifford Sifton, Joseph Martin's replacement as Attorney General, decided that the best way to win the Barrett case would be to muddy the waters with a second case which would emphasize the potential for fragmentation of the school system. The Church of England was the logical selection for this case. It was the only one of the three churches which could reasonably argue that it had educational rights under the Constitution because it had operated schools in the Red River Colony. Also, the Church neither supported the new school system as the Presbyterians did, nor legally challenged the national schools as the Roman Catholics had done. The dislike of the new school system by the Anglican hierarchy was well known and a court challenge by that Church might be seen as surprising but not out of character. Finally, and most importantly, Sifton's legal advisors on the school question included two prominent Anglicans, H. M. Howell and W. E. Perdue, allowing the Government to give the impression that the Church of England was an official sponsor of the court challenge.

Howell, a man Sir John A. Macdonald had once described as being too untrustworthy to be appointed to a judgeship, was particularly important in this process.<sup>293</sup> Indeed, J. W.

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<sup>293</sup> PAM, Schultz Papers, Sir John A. Macdonald to Schultz, October 28, 1887.

Dafoe intimated very strongly that the Government's devious tactics were the ideas of Howell and Perdue.<sup>294</sup> An Anglican layman, former Winnipeg Mayor Alexander Logan, was somehow convinced to file a legal challenge to the national schools using arguments virtually identical to those employed by Ewart in *Barrett v. Winnipeg*. Howell, not only Chancellor of the Diocese of Rupert's Land but also Bishop Machray's personal lawyer, arranged to have Machray submit a deposition supporting the Logan case. In this affidavit Machray, believing the case to be legitimate, discussed the history of the Church of England and education in Manitoba, expressed his dissatisfaction with the national school system and suggested that "the re-establishment of our parish schools is merely a question of means and time."<sup>295</sup> Thus, Howell was in the unique position of arranging for a deposition supporting the case while at the same time appearing for the opposition as a representative of the Provincial Government.

*Logan v. Winnipeg* was a stroke of unethical genius on the part of the organizers of the legal defence of the national schools. It was widely assumed that the case was the action of the Church of England, giving it an air of authenticity and transferring the blame for its instigation to Bishop

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<sup>294</sup> J. W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1931), p. 44.

<sup>295</sup> Machray affidavit in Ewart, p. 15

Machray.<sup>296</sup> J. K. Barrett, writing to an absent Archbishop Taché of the new developments, remarked bitterly that:

Can Your Grace understand the extreme inconsistency of the Bishop of Rupert's Land moving in this matter and yet remaining Chairman of the Advisory Board. Hereafter nothing those people do can surprise me. Their inconsistency began with their Protestantism and will only die with that heresy.<sup>297</sup>

Taché, when approached by reporters on the issue, said that he had not been surprised when the case had been launched since an unnamed prominent Anglican (possibly Bishop Machray) had informed him ten years earlier that the Church of England had every intention of one day re-establishing its parish school system.<sup>298</sup>

Machray very quickly realized how he had been used by the Government and his legal advisor. He authorized W. F. Luxton to write an editorial which denounced the Logan case and attempted to distance the Church of England from the perception of sponsorship. Luxton wrote that "the history of the government's conduct regarding education is an unbroken record of unscrupulousness and duplicity, of which this, its latest act, makes a fitting part. The so-called Church of England case is a pretence, a farce and a fraud."<sup>299</sup> Machray forced Howell to publish a letter in both the Free Press and

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<sup>296</sup> See story reprinted from Toronto Mail in Manitoba Free Press, December 9, 1891.

<sup>297</sup> AASB, J. K. Barrett to Taché, December 6, 1891.

<sup>298</sup> Manitoba Free Press, December 19, 1891.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid, December 14, 1891.

Tribune saying that the Bishop's deposition was only a statement of his views and did not make the Logan case an action, official or unofficial, of the Church of England.<sup>300</sup>

It was too late to dissipate the impact that the Logan case would have on the school question. The case was passed quickly from the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench to the Canadian Supreme Court and subsequently to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council where it was heard at the same time as the Barrett case. Outside of Manitoba few people were aware that Machray had disavowed the case and the law lords of the Privy Council treated it in exactly the manner that Sifton and his advisors wished. The Government won both cases and the Manitoba School Act was declared intra vires.

The Logan case was humiliating for the Church of England and for Machray personally. Archbishop Taché later described the case as:

a lawyer's trick to prejudice the Barrett case. Authors did not take any account of the immense ridicule with which they covered the Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land in the eyes of those who knew his attitude on the Manitoba schools both under the old and new laws.<sup>301</sup>

Anglicans, as with other aspects of the school question, were divided over their reactions to the Logan case. Some reacted with anger at the way their Church was being torn

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<sup>300</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, December, 18, 1891.

<sup>301</sup> W. T. Shaw, "The Role of J. S. Ewart in the Manitoba School Question," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1959) p. 213.

between clerical and lay officials. One anonymous Church member angrily wrote the Free Press after Machray's denunciation of Howell's manoueverings, that:

Can it be that Mr. Howell is at once the adviser of His Lordship and the Government and that he has put His Spiritual Lord in a hole to gratify his temporal masters? That His Lordship's dignity and the position of the Church of England has been compromised by someone is undeniable! It appears to me that His Lordship should clear himself from Mr. Howell's imputation.<sup>302</sup>

Other Anglicans remained unconcerned and treated Howell's action as a necessary evil in the protection of the school system. Many hoped that the Privy Council would bring an end to the debate within their Church. They hoped, however, in vain, and the disagreement continued with perhaps a heightened sense of antagonism within the subsequent Synods.

Apart from a dissenting laity, the Church was also limited in its influence on school policy by a series of important diversions. From 1889 to 1893, the clergy of the Diocese of Rupert's Land was actively involved in an attempt to form a General Synod for the Church of England in Canada.<sup>303</sup> Prior to this time, the Canadian Church had been divided into three Ecclesiastical Provinces; Canada, Rupert's Land, and British Columbia. Each of these Ecclesiastical Provinces were independent and responsible directly to England. It was felt that a national Church of England body should be formed in order to bring all Canadian Anglicans under one

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<sup>302</sup> Winnipeg Free Press, December 17, 1895.

<sup>303</sup> Boon, pp. 251-254.

authority. In 1890, a conference of the various bodies met in Winnipeg to begin organization, a complex procedure which lasted until 1893. At this point the General Synod was formed. Bishop Machray was made the Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land and was further honoured by being elected the first Primate of all Canada.

Perhaps more importantly, the Church also began to develop significant financial problems concurrent with the struggle for the schools. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) informed the Diocese that it intended to withdraw all funds from Manitoba.<sup>304</sup> The Church felt that its existence would be jeopardized by the loss of these funds, and Machray was forced to make repeated trips to England to raise money and to attempt to convince the S. P. G. not to withdraw financial support.<sup>305</sup> The Diocese did manage to stave off financial collapse but only after a considerable investment of time and effort.

While the school question was being argued at a national level, the Church in Manitoba received little support from Anglicans outside the Province. Anglicans either viewed it as a local issue or treated it as a French-English conflict and they were opposed to granting rights to the French-Canadians. In 1893, General Synod did pass a resolution that "religious teaching in our public schools is absolutely nec-

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<sup>304</sup> Boon, pp. 254-255.

<sup>305</sup> R. A. Machray, pp. 409-437.

essary in order to fulfil the true purpose of education and conserve the highest interests of the nation at large."<sup>306</sup>

At the level of the Ecclesiastical Province, a committee was established at Synod whose duties were to be:

- a) to inform themselves fully of the bearing of any legislative actions, whether Dominion or local, upon the religious aspects of education; b) to bring such influence to bear as may, in their opinion be best fitted to make education what it ought to be, the handmaid of the Gospel of Christ.<sup>307</sup>

This committee, however, has no record of ever filing a report and disappeared prior to the next Provincial Synod of 1896. The Dominion Churchman, the national Church of England newspaper, made occasional reference to the Manitoba School Question, generally in support of Machray and of the policies of the Diocese.<sup>308</sup> However, these tended to be infrequent and short.

The Church of England fared even less well in its attempts to garner support for its position among other denominations in the Province. The Diocesan Synod authorized several committees over the years to enter into negotiations with the other major Protestant Churches in order to secure a common front in favour of religious instruction in the public school system. The Presbyterians and Methodists

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<sup>306</sup> House of Commons Sessional Papers, 58 Victoria 1895, No. 20B, Vol. XXVIII, No. 10, p.335.

<sup>307</sup> PAM, RLA, PRL-84-36, Journals of Proceedings of Synod, Reports and Proceedings of the 1893 Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, p. 6.

<sup>308</sup> For example, see the issue on December 17, 1891.

dutifully sent representatives to confer with the Anglicans but differences of opinion were far too great and the resulting resolutions were simply unspecified requests to the Government to provide a reasonable amount of religion in the schools. There was no attempt to define religious instruction, presumably because it was impossible for these three churches to agree on one, and there were no suggestions as to what steps the Government should take to implement the resolutions. As such, these meetings had little impact on public or private policy.

While the Presbyterians and the Methodists ignored the Church of England for the most part, the Baptist Church actively challenged the Anglican position on education. Reverend Alexander Grant, one of the outstanding figures in the history of his Church,<sup>309</sup> and the Baptists' chief spokesman in Manitoba, rarely let an opportunity pass to advise the rest of the Province on his and his Church's views. The Free Press once described him as "a gentleman who is ever forward to counsel and instruct the people of this Province in all matters of a public nature."<sup>310</sup> A strong supporter of his Church's stand on the complete separation of church and state, Grant championed not only the secular schools but also any policy which put distance between public finances and churches. He managed to annoy

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<sup>309</sup> C. C. McLaurin, Pioneering in Western Canada: A Story of the Baptists, (Calgary: published by author, 1939), pp. 123-135.

<sup>310</sup> Manitoba Free Press, June 24, 1890.

all of the major denominations in the Province with his strong support for the removal of tax exemptions for churches and the end of government grants to church operated native residential schools.<sup>311</sup> He was, however, an opponent of the extreme anti-Catholicism so often evident in Protestant Canadian society and he was clearly loathe to associate with it in the context of the school question. The Church of England offered an alternative as a focus for his ridicule of publicly supported religious instruction. Grants' efforts at the 1895 Congregational Church debate have already been mentioned but that was only one of a number of occasions in which he rhetorically skewered an Anglican spokesman. He never missed an opportunity to refute the dire predictions of an officer of the Church of England and his letters to the newspaper attacking Bishop Machray's stand on secular education were often as amusing as they were indignant.<sup>312</sup>

After 1896, the Manitoba School Question began to occupy less and less of the Church of England's time. The issue was not as pressing since the Laurier-Greenway compromise eliminated some although not all of the Church's concerns.<sup>313</sup> The health of Archbishop Machray and Canon O'Meara began to deteriorate (O'Meara died in 1901; Machray in 1904)

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid, p. 130.

<sup>312</sup> See, for example, Grant's letter in the Manitoba Free Press, January 19, 1893.

<sup>313</sup> For the reactions of Machray and O'Meara to the compromise, see the Winnipeg Tribune, November 21, 1896.

depriving the Church of England of its two most ardent spokesmen on the issue.<sup>314</sup> Although, the Church never abandoned its position that religious instruction in the public schools of Manitoba was insufficient,<sup>315</sup> the inability of the Church to affect government policy must undoubtedly have lessened the desire of concerned Anglicans to expend energy on what was clearly a hopeless clause, particularly one which caused so much discord within the Church's ranks.

In conclusion, the Church of England engaged in a long, frustrating and, ultimately, futile struggle to provide what it saw as an appropriate education for its children. Eventually, the distance between church and education became intolerable to the Church of England. The Manitoba School Question proved to be the issue that forced the Church to confront public policy on education. However, in attempting to rectify what the Church saw as the shortcomings of the national schools, the Anglicans discovered that Manitoba

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<sup>314</sup> Machray, pp. 400; 428.

<sup>315</sup> See, for example, PAM, RLA, Diocese of Rupert's Land Papers, Reports and Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, 1916; See also Manitoba Free Press, Nov. 7, 1936, for a discussion of the Diocese's contention that increased religious instruction was required in the schools in order to battle communism; see also PAM, RLA, PRL-84-82, Metropolitan's Papers, File: Committee on Religious Education, for the records relating to Archbishop H. H. Clarke's consideration of a court challenge to force the Manitoba Government to either allow distinctive denominational religious instruction in the public schools or to fund Anglican denominational schools. The plan was rejected when a Church commission, headed by W. L. Morton, determined that there was insufficient support among Clergy and Laity for such a controversial action.

society had changed such that the Church's traditional model of education was no longer in accordance with the majority. When the Church attempted to rally its own members behind a campaign to return to religious instruction, it was confronted with the reality that the laity no longer felt bound or committed to that tradition. Moreover, the Clergy, although supportive of the Church's stand, was too sympathetic to the social agenda of the national schools to be an effective force for change.

## Chapter VI

### CONCLUSIONS

In the past, the Anglo-Protestant churches have been considered as a homogeneous body in relation to the Manitoba School Question. As this thesis clearly demonstrates, such an assumption is not only inaccurate but potentially misleading. Each church emerges with its own distinct view on the role of religion in education and the Manitoba School Question. On the surface, by 1890 there are great similarities among the churches with the Presbyterians and Methodists in particular being very close. However, on careful examination, there are differences between the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches and the Church of England represents a position that could be seen to fall between the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant churches.

Each of the churches studied in this thesis represented an unique institution with its own concerns and history. However, there are common elements from each chapter which reveal a great deal about the climate of opinion in which the Manitoba School Question originated. Certainly the churches' collective experience would suggest that the school question was an outgrowth of firmly entrenched local conditions. The material in these three chapters supports

the arguments made by both Morton and Miller that prevailing opinion in the Province prior to McCarthy's speech at Portage La Prairie was in favour of some change in the educational system. This study also provides evidence to support Miller's contention that the school question was part of a long term pattern of co-option of the social and public institutions of the Province by the post-Confederation Ontario born Protestant elite rather than the result of one instance of demagogic anti-Catholicism.

Each of the three Protestant Churches illustrates the significant change in attitudes towards the role of religious denominations in education and towards the existence of distinctive minorities which the Province underwent as the balance of population shifted in favour of the Ontario immigrants. These two factors were crucial to the demand for changes in the school system. Immediately after Confederation, the Protestant population for the most part, continued to support the Red River Colony tradition of the association between religion and education that was inherent in both sides of the dual school system. Protestant leaders at this time were also either supportive of the rights of minorities, as was Reverend John Black of the Presbyterian Church, pragmatically neutral, as was Bishop Machray of the Church of England, or opposed but lacking sufficient influence to have much impact on public policy, such as Reverend George Young of the Methodist Church. Gradually the influx

of settlers from Ontario changed the dynamics of the Protestant population of Manitoba. By 1889, the majority of the Province's Protestant clergy and laity were strongly supportive of both essentially secular schools and the attempt to eliminate all cultural differences among the general population in order to create a homogeneous society as similar to their own cultural background as possible.

The transition in perspective within Manitoba society was mirrored by the experiences of the three churches. Black's policy of tolerance and tradition was challenged by incoming Presbyterian clergymen from Ontario, such as the Reverends George Bryce and James Robertson, who had little regard for the educational traditions of their church or for coexistence with minorities. The 1873-1877 struggle over the dual school system illustrated that the divisions within the Presbyterian Church were as deep as those in the surrounding society. The subsequent decline in the influence of the Black perspective left the Presbyterians almost uniformly committed to the vision advocated by Bryce and Robertson. The Methodist Church displayed no such struggle over perspective as they had no tradition of tolerance of minorities or religious education to be supplanted, but in 1871 it was not a large enough body to influence the policies of the Province. However, the Ontario migration served to swell tremendously the numbers of Methodists within Manitoba, thereby increasing the power and influence of Young and his

successors and giving the Church influence in 1889 that it had not had in 1871. The Church of England established a third pattern in the way it reacted to the changes brought about by Ontario immigration. The nineteen years between 1870 and 1889 saw the Church change from a relatively homogeneous group to one split between a British or Red River born clergy which supported the traditional role of religion in education and an Ontario born laity which had little trouble accepting secularized schools. Although both clergy and laity may have been in accord on the importance of assimilating minorities into a Protestant culture, the debate on the role of religion in education polarized the Church.

In 1890, the common thread among the experiences of all three churches was that the perspectives which dominated them, as in the case of the Presbyterians and the Methodists, or divided them, as in the case of the Anglicans, were based on secular concerns. Supporters of national schools within these churches referred not to theological or doctrinal traditions within their churches to defend their positions but to arguments of social utility. When these secular arguments were challenged, by Farquharson for the Presbyterians, Andrews and Aikins for the Methodists, and Machray and the bulk of the clergy for the Church of England, these dissenting concerns were either ignored or attacked by a marshalling of questionable arguments which carefully avoided the points of the original criticisms.

The Protestant supporters of national schools were acting more in their capacity as secular leaders of the Ontario-born middle class than as representatives of their church or their God. The Manitoba School Question was, for them as for similar leaders in the Province, simply a logical part of the transition of the structures of the Province to fit their own ideals and to serve their economic interests. Yet at the same time, the Presbyterian and Methodist clergy gave an "other worldly" justification to the actions of the Government both by the simple existence of their support and by their confident assertions that the society envisaged by the creators of the national school system was one desired by God as an example to the world.

If the experiences of the Anglo-Protestant Churches reveal a great deal about the climate of opinion in which the decisions over education were made in the Province of Manitoba, the school question in turn reveals a great deal about the limits on the power of the clergy of those churches. Certainly the Protestant clergy were influential leaders in Manitoba society but, as with many other leaders, their influence was only effective when it served to reinforce arguments already acceptable to their followers. The inability of the Bishop and clergy of the Church of England to have their laity conform to Church policy is indicative of this point but the same problem was experienced by the Presbyterian and Methodist clergy during the elections of

1896. The regional bodies of both churches voted overwhelmingly in favour of censoring the Conservative Government for its policy of remedial legislation and the threats of the clergy of both churches were clearly messages to their laity that they should either vote Liberal or abstain from voting in order to protect the national schools. However, Manitoba was one of the few bright spots for the Conservative Party in that election, where they took 4 out of 7 seats in the Province and were only narrowly defeated in 2 others. The Presbyterian and Methodist clergy were simply unable to sustain anti-Conservative sentiment and, as Cooke and Morton both argued, the Provincial electorate, bored with the Manitoba School Question and believing the educational status quo to be immutable, turned to other criteria in casting their ballot. Indeed the lack of concern over the school question demonstrated by the Manitoba electorate in the election of 1896 may have been responsible for the surprising amount of support which the Laurier-Greenway compromise received from Protestant clergymen. The secularization of Manitoba society led to a reduction in the power and influence of the Protestant clergy. However, this did not distress most clergy since they were supporters and representatives of those attitudes that were underlying the changes that were occurring.

The final conclusion of this study is that the principal victim of the Manitoba School Question was the individual

right of choice. There is no doubt that French Roman Catholics suffered the most as a result of the Manitoba School Act of 1890, but every individual in the Province lost the right to make important decisions about education for him or her self and for his or her dependents. Although the Provincial majority, including many clergymen, were prepared to forego religious instruction in the schools this did not give them the right to eliminate such an option for those who still wished it. That the majority attempted to do so in order to fulfil their own social agenda displayed an arrogance unhampered by the concerns of others. Arguments against the continuation of religious instruction in the schools that rested on practical or economic concerns, however accurate these concerns may have been, did not give the majority the right to dictate to any minority. The success of the Protestant majority in co-opting the schools to satisfy their needs and fit their own image shows the danger of the absolute power of a parliamentary majority when it is not bound by a strong constitution which recognizes individual and group rights.

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