

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF THE
NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY GOVERNMENT
OF MANITOBA, 1969-1975

by

VINCENT JOSEPH BUETI

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thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-
wise reproduced without the author's written permission.

What I am saying is that the public school system is failing. In no sense am I saying that it should be abandoned. It needs, in my opinion, a good shaking up. Nowhere in our society is there such a state of oppression as I think exists inside the school room. I think that if this party accomplishes nothing else in government except this one thing of shaking up the school system, of re-evaluation, reformulating the functions of the educational system, of liberating the schools in short, I think if it accomplishes nothing else but this, it will have earned the right to govern.*

*

Manitoba, Legislative Assembly,
Debates and Proceedings, Cy Gonick,
19 May 1970, p. 2056.

ABSTRACT

After a lengthy period in opposition during which time the Manitoba NDP and its predecessor, the CCF, gave relatively little attention to education, the party, following its election in 1969, introduced a far reaching series of innovations in provincial education. The intended purpose of these innovations was to reform what the NDP perceived to be an elitist school system. To achieve this objective, the Schreyer government during the period from 1969 to 1975 pursued the policies of decentralizing administrative authority; democratizing the schools; promoting community involvement; encouraging experimentation; advancing greater equality of opportunity; and expanding minority language rights. These policies and the NDP's philosophy were consistent with "progressive" rather than "traditionalist" education.

The reactions on the part of the political opposition parties, professional groups, the press, and the general public to the NDP government's attempts at reformation must be described as unfavourable. While some support may have existed in the early stages, by 1974 disapproval was at times vehement. The government was accused of having "trivialized" education with its encouragement of "permissiveness." Critics maintained that academic standards had dropped because of a lack of emphasis on the "basics" or the "three Rs", and the overemphasis on students' social rather than intellectual development.

Although it is difficult to conclusively prove that academic standards did in fact decline because of the NDP's educational policies, it is the author's opinion that the "progressive" education promoted by

the government assisted least the children of the lower classes whose interests the Manitoba New Democratic Party government was avowedly dedicated to improving.

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Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife, Sandie, whose patience and faith in my abilities enabled this paper to be completed.

The author accepts full responsibility for any omissions or shortcomings.

V.J.B.

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CHAPTER I

EDUCATION IN MANITOBA

A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of public school education in Manitoba began with the establishment of Manitoba as a province of Canada in 1870 with jurisdiction over education. Within its first year Manitoba's government passed legislation instituting a "dual system" of education wherein publicly supported separate, denominational schools were founded for the French-Roman Catholic and English-Protestant groups in the province.¹ Under the dual system both groups enjoyed the right to instruct in their own languages, make regulations, certify teachers, set up curriculum, and maintain equal representation on a provincial Board of Education. With the increasing immigration of English speaking Protestants, however, the population balance shifted against the French Catholics and their educational privileges were gradually withdrawn. In 1873, for instance, the provision of equal provincial grants to the two groups came to an end; and two years later, the equality of representation on the Board of Education was set aside.² Meanwhile, the period from 1870 to 1890 also witnessed a widespread growth in elementary education; the beginnings of public secondary education; the founding of the University of Manitoba; the commencement of teacher training; more regular school inspections; and initiatives in special education for the handicapped. Religious rivalry was largely lacking during this

¹ Keith Wilson, "The Development of Education in Manitoba" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1967), p. 97.

² Ibid., p. 141.

period under the dual system.

By 1890 French Catholics comprised less than a third of the population and the English Protestants had a clear majority. According to one recent writer, there followed "an act of Orangemen determined to crush Catholicism."³ The Liberal government of Premier Thomas Greenway enacted legislation which abolished the dual system of separate schools and instituted in its place a system of non-denominational public schools. These were administered by local boards of trustees and the newly created Department of Education.⁴

In response, the French minority fought to regain the rights it believed had been guaranteed by Section ninety-three of the British North America Act and by Section twenty-two of the Manitoba Act of 1870.⁵ The "Manitoba School Question" eventually became a national issue as appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London led to a ruling that Manitoba had the constitutional right to pass its 1890 legislation. French Manitobans then resorted to the Governor General-in-Council for remedial legislation to invoke the protective provisions of the BNA Act. The subsequent refusal of Manitoba's government to obey a federal order to restore the abrogated

³ Gerald Clark, Canada: The Uneasy Neighbour (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965; Canadian Best-Seller Library, 1967), p. 292.

⁴ Wilson, "Education in Manitoba," p. 199.

⁵ F. Henry Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 94.

rights of the French minority, however, forced the federal Conservative government of Sir Charles Tupper to take the issue to the nation in the election of 1896. The result was an electoral victory by the Liberal party led by Wilfrid Laurier with his "provincial rights" platform, and an indirect victory for the Manitoba legislature. The subsequent Laurier-Greenway agreement of 1897, which was later called a "compromise," left the non-sectarian school system intact but led to the amendment of The Public Schools Act.⁶ The Act was amended to include a clause which permitted ten or more French-speaking, or any non-English-speaking pupils, in a given school, to receive instruction in their mother tongue as well as in English. Despite the varied reactions to the compromise, the legislation of 1897 formally closed the language issue for the time being.

During the seven year period dominated by the Manitoba School Question, significant administrative developments took place in education. Notably, under the authority of the Department of Education an Advisory Board, created in 1890, determined curriculum, authorized textbooks and distributed provincial grants to local school boards.

But problems arose from the Laurier-Greenway compromise. The bilingual instruction it permitted such immigrant groups as the Mennonites, Ukrainians and Poles drew increasing criticism from

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Jim Small, Robert Bryce, and Gordon McIntosh, "A Review of Some Recent Developments in Education on the Prairies," in The Failure of Educational Reform in Canada, ed. Douglas Myers (Toronto: McClelland and Stuart, 1973), p. 182.

English speaking Protestants who wanted schools to promote assimilation. To curtail what has been termed "a near riot in non-English education," the Liberal government of T.C. Norris in 1916 ended bilingual instruction.⁷ At the same time, it made school attendance compulsory for all children between the ages of five and fourteen, put greater emphasis on technical education, initiated systematic medical examinations of students, and took a few hesitant steps toward school district consolidation.⁸

After these reforms, however, there followed a period, covering almost forty years, that has been called one of "educational stagnation."⁹ From 1921 to 1928, for instance, despite an increase of fifteen thousand students in the public schools, the provincial appropriation for education remained constant and declined in relation to the total budget.¹⁰ In fact, 104 schools were closed in 1923 for lack of funds and the government sought even further economies. During the depression of the 1930s fiscal restraint continued. Only during and after the Second World War was the earlier commitment to progress to some degree restored. Nonetheless, by 1959 school facilities had become almost universally accessible and

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Ibid.

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W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957; reprint 2d ed., Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 350; Wilson, "Education in Manitoba," p. 317.

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Wilson, "Education in Manitoba," p. 329.

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David Munroe, The Organization and Administration of Education In Canada (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p. 99.

teacher training was well established in Winnipeg and Brandon. On the negative side, however, many rural schools remained inadequately financed, teacher recruitment was inadequate, and for these and other reasons, the provincial system fell far short of meeting the democratic goal of equality of educational opportunity. The reluctance of successive provincial governments to initiate extensive educational reforms, according to one historian, was due to their "rural conservatism":

Rural apathy and rural conservatism tended to retard educational progress not only in the rural areas, but also in the Province as a whole; for rural attitudes dominated the provincial legislature and directly influenced educational legislation. The failure of the movements towards consolidation meant, in effect, that educational progress was confined largely to the urban areas.¹¹

This pattern began to change in 1957 when the Liberal-Progressive government headed by Douglas Campbell appointed a Royal Commission to examine all aspects of Manitoba's school system. Under the chairmanship of Dr. R.O. MacFarlane, a professor of history at the University of Manitoba, the Commission conducted hearings across the province and in 1958 issued an interim report. The report recommended, amongst other things, substantial increases in provincial grants related to teacher qualifications, consolidation and improvement of secondary schools and an equalization levy to assist poorer school divisions.¹²

In the same year, a new Progressive Conservative government headed by Duff Roblin was elected and it moved swiftly to implement these recommendations. Between 1959 and 1969, the number of school

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Wilson, "Education in Manitoba," p. 426.

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Manitoba, Interim Report, Manitoba Royal Commission on Education, (1958), pp. 38, 45, 89, cited by Wilson, "Education in Manitoba," p. 339.

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districts was reduced from 1,777 to forty-one. These new "unitary divisions" unlike their predecessors were responsible for both elementary and secondary education. Accompanying this consolidation was an extensive school construction program designed to accommodate the increasing school enrolment which from 1959 to 1969 rose by more than 30 percent to a total of 239,834 public school students.¹⁴ The increase in student enrolment was particularly dramatic at the secondary level. This was primarily due to the post-war "baby boom", "stay in school" campaigns and the raising of the school attendance age to sixteen.¹⁵

With the increase in government grants for teachers' salaries the status of the profession improved. Better salary scales and working conditions induced more people, particularly men, into teacher training programs and encouraged existing teachers to improve their qualifications. In 1962 the government, desirous of reducing the number of poorly qualified "permit" teachers, made grade twelve standing the minimum entrance requirement to Teachers' College.¹⁶ It also offered attractive bursaries, loans, and scholarships, and launched a teacher recruitment campaign in other countries, notably the United Kingdom.¹⁷ Partly as a

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Manitoba, Department of Education, Annual Report 1959-60 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1960), p. 21 (hereafter cited as Manitoba, Annual Report); Idem, Annual Report 1962-63, p. 18; Idem, Annual Report 1968-69, p. 11.

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Idem, Annual Report 1958-59, p. 10; Idem, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 108.

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Idem, Annual Report 1964-65, p. 19; Idem, Annual Report 1963-64, p. 27.

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Idem, Annual Report 1961-62, p. 14.

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Idem, Annual Report 1967-68, p. 31.

result of these policies, over the period from 1958 to 1964, the total number of teachers rose by almost 30 percent while the number holding university degrees increased by 88 percent.¹⁸

During the decade from 1959 to 1969 there were also major curriculum changes. The old program of studies for secondary schools with its "General," "High School Leaving" and "Vocational" streams, was replaced by a broader program offering a "University Entrance Course," a "General Course," a "Business Education Course," an "Industrial Course" and an "Occupational Entrance Course."¹⁹ This provided more business and vocational training for students not continuing to university. In addition, beginning in the mid-sixties, the government began to reappraise traditional teaching methods and to consider introducing more flexibility in the form of wider subject and option choices for secondary students.

Attempts to respond to the problems of education were not always free of political overtones. The Manitoba School Question was briefly revived as a consequence of the MacFarlane Commission's recommendation that public aid be restored to parochial schools. During 1963 and 1964 this issue drew sufficient controversy for Premier Roblin to consider some form of action. His compromise solution was "shared-services" legislation in 1965 through which public school boards could

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Idem, Annual Report 1963-64, p. 27.

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Manitoba, Department of Education, Administrative Handbook Grades 9-12 1968-69, pp. 2-3.

enter into agreements with private schools for the provision of trans-
 portation and various other services and facilities at no cost.²⁰

Two years later, the government allowed French as a language of
 instruction for as much as half of each school day.²¹

By 1969 many problems which had long beset Manitoba's school system appeared to have been resolved. In fact, the removal of some of the system's structural deficiencies permitted and facilitated the growing notion of "equality of opportunity for all" which accompanied the dynamic growth of mass education in the sixties. Thus, the critical issues in education during this period increasingly became the provision of courses to serve individual differences and to heighten student motivation. By consolidating school districts and by replacing small schools with larger, better equipped "regional" schools the government enabled school divisions to introduce more diverse programs ostensibly to meet the various needs of the enlarged school population. Slowly the broad range of curriculum shifted from subject oriented to interest oriented learning.²² It was in this changing philosophical context that Manitoba's first New Democratic Party government took office in 1969.

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Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Debates and Proceedings, 10 May 1965, p. 2571 (hereafter cited as Manitoba, Debates).

21

Ibid., 20 March 1967, p. 1821.

22

Canadian Education Association, Education in Transition: A Capsule View 1960 to 1975 (Toronto: CEA, 1975), pp. 18-20.

CHAPTER II

NDP EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY PRIOR TO 1969

Prior to 1969 the Manitoba New Democratic Party did not possess a well developed educational philosophy. During the period from its founding convention in 1961, when it replaced the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the party was primarily concerned with the achievement of equality of educational opportunity for the benefit of the lower classes. This was expanded after 1965 by related concerns.

Since education fell under provincial jurisdiction, educational matters were not dealt with in specific terms in the "Regina Manifesto" adopted at the CCF's First National Convention in 1933.¹ Nonetheless, because many CCF spokesmen both in the federal parliament and provincial legislatures were teachers by profession, the educational policies of the CCF historically reflected the belief that education was one of the major roads to a better society.² In this regard, equality of educational opportunity was considered a prerequisite to the social mobility necessary for every individual to achieve the position in society appropriate to his ability and industry. A fairly typical statement, at its Seventh National Convention in 1942, expressed this view:

Free education is the mainspring of democracy. Full equality of opportunity must be provided in all parts of the Dominion to prepare young Canadians to assume their rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship. This objective requires Dominion scholarships and generous Dominion Government grants to provinces for technical and general education, for adult education....³

¹ David Lewis and Frank Scott, Make This Your Canada (Toronto: Central Canada Publishing, 1943), App., pp.2-6.

² Dean E. McHenry, The Third Force In Canada (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 280.

³ Lewis and Scott, Your Canada, p. 212.

Three years later, the party's platform for the 1945 election advocated that the purpose of Canada's educational system should be to develop the natural capacities of each individual and to provide those with special abilities every opportunity to continue their vocational or academic studies, through school and university, at public expense.⁴ Another party statement at about this time recommended more curriculum flexibility; provision of medical, dental and nutritional services in schools; more responsiveness to local and parental concerns; and a greater emphasis on moral values.⁵

The transformation in 1961 from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation to the New Democratic Party at both the federal and provincial levels did not generate significant changes in policy with respect to education. Annual NDP conventions in Manitoba generally affirmed traditional CCF proposals: free education for all; greater curricular flexibility; improved vocational and adult education facilities; shifting the cost of education away from municipal taxes; and increased community use of schools.⁶

Beyond this, NDP spokesmen in Manitoba's legislature made statements which illustrated the party's widening scope of concern regarding education. Edward Schreyer, MLA for Brokenhead constituency,

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D. Owen Carrigan, Canadian Party Platforms 1867-1968 (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1968), p. 149.

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Joseph W. Noseworthy, "A Program for Education," in Planning for Freedom; Sixteen Lectures on the CCF, Its Policies and Program (Toronto: Ontario CCF, 1944), p. 136.

6

Cf., Stanley Knowles, The New Party (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961), Addendum, p. 22; Manitoba New Democratic Party, Policies of the NDP (n.p., [1976]).

announced in 1965 that for seven months a small group of NDP members had been meeting and that they had developed a program of three educational goals.⁷ The first was the making of post-secondary education "universally available" primarily by way of increased bursaries and loans. In supporting this earlier, Party Leader Russ Paulley characterized Conservative aid for students as "peanuts" and claimed that in general, only the children of well-to-do parents could attend university.⁸ Sidney Green, MLA for Inkster constituency, went further to argue that the poor, by virtue of their taxes, subsidized the education of the rich by financing universities which were inaccessible to them.⁹ The second educational goal was to make high schools more "comprehensive" with more course alternatives and options. The third goal was the introduction of "continuing education programs" as a preparation for "leisure" by adapting high schools to become "community center schools" or "community schools" where local craftsmen or professionals could conduct classes, and where local residents could hold community activities and recreational programs. According to Schreyer, education should prepare students and citizens for the increasing leisure

⁷ Manitoba, Debates, 16 March 1965, pp. 659-62.

⁸ Ibid., Russ Paulley MLA for Transcona, 21 February 1964, p. 361.

⁹ Ibid., 7 April 1969, p. 1019.

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time that modern technology was creating.

Statements by other party members supported and complemented these goals. Lemuel Harris, MLA for Logan constituency, argued in favour of extending the curricular decision-making role of teachers.¹¹ The MLA for Elmwood, Russell Doern, maintained that students should also have greater influence in the decision-making process.¹² As well, for the higher grades he advocated placing more importance upon daily work and individualized instruction and less importance upon formal examinations. For the lower grades, particularly in low-income areas, Doern urged the use of "Montessori methods by which children are allowed to, in effect, do what they want; they choose their activities, they work on them as long as they want and so the element of freedom and the element of inner direction is [sic] very strong."¹³ Art Wright, the MLA for Seven Oaks, meanwhile held that schools should give more consideration to each pupil's background and

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Ibid., 16 March 1965, pp. 665-66.

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Ibid., 11 March 1966, pp. 860-61.

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Ibid., 18 April 1969, p. 1422.

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Ibid., 13 May 1968, p. 1928. The "Montessori System" was created by Maria Montessori (1870-1952), an Italian educator, who believed that by providing young children with certain exact yet simple didactic materials they could learn to teach themselves after an initial demonstration. She also believed that learning abilities regarding various skills were directly related to chronological age and that this sequence should determine the general pattern for instruction.

emotional makeup.¹⁴ Another member, Saul Miller, who in 1966 succeeded Wright, declared that education should be "sensitive to the diversity of the student, to his ability, [and] to his aspirations";¹⁵ later he added: "literacy is not enough any more; we've just simply got to bring every child to the maximum of his potential."¹⁶

Thus the Manitoba NDP through the 1960s gradually broadened the scope of the CCF's principal concern for extending educational opportunity by government assistance for the poor. By 1969 the party was also advocating the establishment of community centred schools, curricular flexibility, administrative decentralization and a greater sensitivity to individual student interests and presumed needs.

14 Ibid., 10 March 1966, p. 823.

15 Ibid., 21 April 1967, p. 2817.

16 Ibid., 3 April 1969, p. 997.

CHAPTER III

NDP EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY 1969-75

In the Manitoba provincial election held on 25 June 1969, the NDP, led by Edward Schreyer, unexpectedly defeated the Progressive Conservative government headed by Walter Weir. Some two weeks later Weir resigned and the new Schreyer administration was sworn in. The new government was unusual in at least two respects. It was the first avowedly social-democratic government in Manitoba history; and to a greater extent than ever before, its members were drawn from the field of education. Schreyer himself was a former high school teacher and university lecturer; and out of the total of twenty-eight NDP members elected, ten, or over a third, were teachers or professors.¹ Given the preponderance of educators in the NDP caucus and cabinet, it was not surprising that the new government gave a high priority to what it considered to be educational reform.

It would perhaps be an error to ascribe to this NDP government a single, coherent philosophy of education; for like every political group it included members from a variety of backgrounds who likely held diverse views on education as on other matters. On rare occasions this difference of opinion revealed itself in Manitoba's legislature. In general, however, during the period from 1969 to 1975, cabinet ministers as well as backbenchers expressed certain recurrent

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Manitoba, Debates, Doern, 27 August 1969, p. 238.

concerns. These usually took the form of criticisms of the "old" school system and proposals for change. To a degree, these in conjunction with other party and government statements comprised a fairly consistent perspective, if not a fully developed and coherent philosophy.

During the Manitoba NDP's first five and one-half years in power the new government often stated its educational goals in vague or platitudinous terms:

1. Equality of educational opportunity whereby the school system shall provide Manitobans with the opportunity for achievement, and the opportunity to develop distinct and diverse talents and skills;

2. A comprehensive system of education whereby the public system in Manitoba shall provide a program to enrich individual life and contribute to the cohesion and vitality of a democratic and pluralistic society;

3. A system for the individual and society whereby the school system will direct itself to the provision of educational alternatives which contribute to the fullest development of the individual and which meet the needs of our society;

4. A school system responsive to community needs whereby the school interacts with and responds to the community in which it is located.²

The distinct beliefs from which these four broad goals sprang, however, are less obscure. First, the NDP placed great emphasis upon the notion of rapid technological and social change which obliged schools to "prepare students for the future" more than they had in the past. This concern to make education "relevant" was particularly evident until 1974. Both NDP Ministers of Education for the period

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Manitoba, Debates, Ben Hanuschak MLA for Burrows, 8 May 1974, p. 3246; see also, Manitoba, Department of Education, A Reference Paper on Selected Topics in Education, 1973, pp. 9-19.

1969 to 1975 voiced firm belief in the need to respond to rapid change.

In 1971, Saul Miller, a former businessman, municipal mayor and Minister of Education from 1969 to 1971, stated:

We must be prepared to break from the conventional mould and transform our educational system through a process of system wide reform to humanistic objectives which will enhance human dignity and self-confidence in a society which is marked by continuous change....³

One year later, Miller's successor, Ben Hanuschak, a former teacher and Minister of Education from 1971 to 1976, stated that :

Naturally the first fact that we must face is the continuing accelerating rate of change itself. It is well known that science and the technologies have advanced far beyond the comprehension of most....⁴

According to the NDP, modern societies were experiencing an "information explosion" wherein an unprecedented production of new information and knowledge necessitated the modification of the educational process.⁵

In the past, the school system was the predominant source of knowledge; education was designated as the territory of the schools and students were to remain in school until they finished learning. But learning, according to the NDP, did not end with high school, college or university. It was a life long process. Consequently,

curriculum may no longer be regarded as a fixed body of content presented according to some predetermined pattern, but rather as a variety of experiences geared more specifically to individual student interests... for students who will live out much of their lives in the 21st century.⁶

³ Manitoba, Debates, 7 June 71, p. 1596.

⁴ Ibid., 2 June 72, p. 2618.

⁵ Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 6.

⁶ Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 15 April 1970, p. 957.

Moreover, this knowledge and information, being now easily accessible through the media, diminished the importance of schools as a source of learning. More than ever before, students as well as adults would gain most of their education from their surroundings, their community and their life experiences. Schools would have to adapt accordingly:

There is every reason to believe that society will transfer its focus from the production of goods to the development of the individual. Thus, the school as the only public building available in every community may well become the centre for the distribution of an entire spectrum of services - social, recreational and educational. The reality of leisure and the increasing complexity of modern life will force an increasing emphasis on adult education. The school building must be a multi-use unit, with the teaching of children only one use of the building.⁷

This view also expected, and welcomed, a redistribution of decision-making authority in the school system. The Schreyer administration intended that the residents of a school area should be involved in the development and operation of regular academic and community programs.

The NDP also maintained that the "old" school system, designed by and for the "middle class," did not do justice to the lower economic classes or minority groups in Manitoba.⁸ In the legislature, Hanuschak argued that since 1916, when school attendance was made compulsory and English was made the sole language of instruction, the schools were meant to serve an assimilative function.

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Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 27.

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The terms "middle class," "lower class," etc., although frequently used by the NDP, were never specifically defined and it is likely that nuances of meaning varied from one source or context to another. For example, see Manitoba, Debates, Ian Turnbull, MLA for Osborne, 19 June 1970, p. 3038.

While providing what were considered to be necessary skills and knowledge, the schools were also expected to introduce students to the English-Canadian culture. During the same time, educational administrators were resolute about what knowledge or skills were supposedly most necessary and erected, accordingly, a school system which was characterized by tight controls over textbooks, curricula, and teachers, and enforced by a system of external examinations and provincial inspectors. The school system essentially aimed at preparing a minority of pupils for university while giving the rest a general education consisting of basic skills.⁹ In carrying out this policy of promoting uniformity through standardization, the schools bypassed students who did not meet their rigid academic standards.¹⁰ Inevitably, whatever its merits, this system had one major defect: it promoted a classbound "elitist society."¹¹ For the most part, those students who reached university were predominantly from middle and upper socio-economic status homes.

According to Hanuschak, the system's external controls, thought to be necessary in the past to counteract the lack of qualified teachers, were now cumbersome since teachers had improved. Also students were forced into a particular mould regardless of their background, interests, or capacity. The external Departmental examinations emphasized only

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Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 7 April 1975, p. 996.

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Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 20.

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Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 10 May 1974, p. 3368.

the recall of factual information and essay writing. These examinations and periodic visits by Departmental inspectors measured the performance of both teachers and students. This system, according to the analysis of NDP critics, was simple, authoritarian, outmoded and unfair.¹² Miller stated in 1970 that "despite a free primary and secondary educational system, not all social classes of our young people profit co-equally...."¹³ Equality of opportunity meant more than the provision of equal dollar education for all students, and more than the notion that all students should leave the school system with the same knowledge. The concept of equity in educational opportunity recognized that students differed with respect to their social, cultural and economic backgrounds as well as their intellectual and psychological capacities for learning. Therefore, differing levels of resources and effort had to be expended in order to provide truly equal educational opportunities for children with diverse needs. Manitoba's educational system should enable all children, regardless of social class, to develop to their fullest potential:

Education is a very closely tied-in aspect of social development and support of students should be fostered on the same basis as other aspects of social development, that is, to be geared towards aiding the fulfillment of the individuals in our society. Support to the individual in need who possesses the capacity and the desire to better himself through education should not be viewed as attaching a stigma to that individual, but rather as a duty upon government....¹⁴

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Ibid., 7 April 1975, p. 996.

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Ibid., 15 April 1970, p. 955.

14

Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 15 April 1970, p. 956.

Related to this concern for the lower classes was the NDP interest in minority groups. At the party's 1971 annual convention a resolution was passed urging the amendment of The Public Schools Act to facilitate the extension of minority language rights.¹⁵

Later that year, Miller stated that:

For many years our public schools have mirrored a single culture. They have transmitted a set of values which emphasized material success, property, the Puritan ethic, competition. The schools have become the leading agents in retaining the status quo.¹⁶

A government-authorized review of provincial education made a similar point in claiming that the excessive centralization of authority, and the standardization of courses had little impact on the cultural mosaic of Manitoba's society, except where it had been harmful in denying benefits of schooling to those who differed.¹⁷ According to Miller, schools should instead accommodate and nourish the province's variety of cultural origins:

The public school system must recognize that in Manitoba ours is a heterogeneous society and that the schools must reflect the cultural mosaic of our people.¹⁸

The NDP also believed that the province's traditional school system was dictatorial and overly competitive. Speaking in the legislature in 1970, Cy Gonick, an economics professor elected as MLA for Crescentwood, asserted that prior to the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century only a small minority of the population was

¹⁵ Manitoba New Democratic Party, Policies.

¹⁶ Manitoba, Debates, 7 June 1971, p. 1596.

¹⁷ Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 19.

¹⁸ Manitoba, Debates, 7 June 1971, p. 1596.

educated -- the privileged who controlled society. The public school system was a distinct component of the development of industry. While a pre-industrial society did not require a literate work force, the Industrial Revolution demanded it. Early industrialization required a trained, fairly literate work force and thus compulsory primary education was established. As the economy and technology of industrial society advanced, the need for higher education increased to the secondary and post-secondary levels. Hence, the educational system's growth was, by and large, a response to economic needs. It trained children so that they would have industrial skills and appropriate attitudes. That was why competition for grades, awards and gold stars was so important in the educational system. It encouraged a competitive relationship between students as training for the outside world.¹⁹

This also explained, Gonick claimed, the strong authoritarian structure of schools. Students were trained to be obedient to their superiors. There was a "top down" system of authority in the schools and democracy was shunned. Children were trained from kindergarten to university to accept authority, regurgitate the "truth" and avoid asking "why." If they were trained well in the schools they would become good consumers, cheerful spectators and obedient employees. In the process, however, the classroom was "drenched in fear".²⁰ Children were afraid of failing, afraid of giving the wrong answers

¹⁹ Manitoba, Debates, 19 May 1970, p. 2054.

²⁰ Ibid.

and afraid of punishment. Many primary schools were run as minor tyrannies where pupils sat in total silence with their hands folded and their heads to the front. Thus, Gonick demanded that the NDP,

end the monolithic public school system; open it up to fresh ideas, allow individual schools to develop their own styles, allow teachers and students to develop their own curriculum and approach, allow parents to become more closely involved if they wish to, as part of the educational system, as learners and teachers.²¹

For those students older than fourteen years of age, Gonick argued, a wider freedom of choice was in order. If students chose their own time and chose their own topics, and if teachers taught what they taught best, (that which interested them the most), then the result would be "more lively, independent, responsible and inventive people."²²

Regimentation should be ended and school rules reduced to a minimum.

In 1974, referring to education under the previous Conservative government, Hanuschak described it as "days of dictatorship."²³ He portrayed the previous system as "rigid", "lock-step" and uncompromising to students who were not suited for university. It was a system based upon the "survival of the fittest" where examinations were used to weed out all but the best.²⁴ It was a system that "may have ruined" many lives because of its strict regulations and standards.²⁵ Moreover, this "totalitarian" system with its emphasis on examinations encouraged rote

21 Ibid., p. 2056.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 10 May 1974, p. 3368.

24 Ibid., p. 3372.

25 Ibid., p. 3374.

memorization rather than true learning.

Lastly, NDP spokesmen claimed that the school system should move towards greater "humanism." Schools should encourage more democracy, leisure, self-fulfillment and social values. In 1971 Miller stated that the Core Report²⁷ gave a "succinct articulation" of the proper aim of education:

The basic purpose of education is to provide the instrument through which each individual realizes self-respect, self-fulfillment, and his relevance in a dynamic society, and it is mandatory that the educational system be ongoing, flexible, and centred on the human needs of the students that it is designed to serve.²⁸

In a similar vein, Miller had previously stated that education should be a "personal, sensitive and individual experience that has one supreme end: the attainment of those characteristics that are found in the noble and compassionate man."²⁹ Education, in other words, should help students to know and accept themselves as unique individuals. Every individual should be aided to achieve the best that was in him, including not only his skills and intellect, but also his emotions, character and moral growth.³⁰

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Ibid., Harvey Bostrom MLA for Rupertsland, 13 May 1974, pp. 3428, 3456.

27

Manitoba, Department of Education, Report of the Core Committee on the Reorganization of the Secondary School, 1973. This document can be interpreted as a major source of NDP views. In 1970 Miller stated that, "I anticipate that it [Core Report] will provide important guidelines for the future of our secondary schools...." Manitoba, Debates, 15 April 1970, p. 957. In 1974 Hanuschak stated that the Revised High School Program to be officially implemented in 1975 was the "response" to the Core Report. Manitoba, Debates, 10 May 1974, p. 3268.

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Manitoba, Core Report, p. 3, as cited in Manitoba, Debates, 7 June 1971, p. 1597.

29

Miller as cited in Winnipeg Free Press, 17 October 1970.

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Manitoba, Core Report, pp. 1 - 2; Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 7 June 1971, p. 1597.

Traditional views of education, the NDP held, considered the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills as the primary objectives of instructional programs. In their narrowest form, however, these programs were of the "mind-stocking" variety, based upon the belief that there existed a body of knowledge and a range of skills that adults possessed and that needed to be passed on to succeeding generations by being recorded in books, taught by rote, and tested. At their best, these programs recognized that the broader significance attached to the terms "knowledge" and "skills" went beyond simple rote operations.³¹ But nowadays, more than at any other point in history, the complexity and extent of existing knowledge made it impossible for anyone to absorb more than a very small part of that knowledge. Because of this challenge, the NDP maintained that the schools were obliged to adopt a new approach -- one which stressed "how" to learn rather than "what" to learn.³² On this point the Core Report declared that the development of "attitudes" had become more important than the specific content of the curriculum:

This is not to suggest that content is no longer necessary, but rather that the exact content of the curriculum is less important than the process of learning and the attitudes toward life and learning that are developed.³³

Schools should provide a foundation of skills which would enable independent learning and the assimilation of further knowledge. The goal would be the development of students who regarded their lives as a process of continued learning and were therefore receptive,

³¹ Manitoba, Core Report, p. 1.

³² Manitoba, Debates, Rene Toupin MLA for Springfield, 17 July 1972, p. 4248.

³³ Manitoba, Core Report, p. 10.

rather than resistant, to social change. Miller again stressed this idea in 1972:

What we do have to do I think is re-think our whole philosophy of what education is all about -- and I blame us, not the young people -- I blame us for equating education with jobs which are related only to the production of goods. We have to think in terms of education leading to a meaningful life, to work which is meaningful, to the person himself or herself. ³⁴

Schooling should be a preparation for life wherein the benefits of an increasingly "mechanistic society" would permit work to become less toil-some and more satisfying. The advancement of society into the "super-industrial revolution" stage necessitated the introduction of "human qualities" and social conscience into education since man was in danger of becoming a "slave, rather than a master of science."³⁵

Thus, schools should focus their efforts on the socialization process and personality development.³⁶

To achieve this, party spokesmen asserted that schools should become more democratic. This implied, to begin with, extending a greater respect towards pupils. Thus, at its 1972 annual convention the NDP passed a resolution urging the abolition of "corporal punishment" (strapping).³⁷ To actualize the notion of democracy, schools were to

³⁴ Manitoba, Debates, 2 June 1972, p. 2609.

³⁵ Hanuschak as cited in Winnipeg Free Press, 23 October 1971; Idem, 16 November 1971.

³⁶ Manitoba, Core Report, p. 6; Manitoba, Reference Paper, chap. 3 passim.

³⁷ Manitoba New Democratic Party, Policies.

provide pupils with early and consistent opportunities for participatory decision-making. "In this way, students learn moral values, respect and concern for themselves and for their fellows."³⁸ As well, the improvement of education in general required "open" decision-making -- the increased involvement of students, teachers, parents, and the public. Such involvement was critical for the development of a humanistic learning environment in which the "minds and spirits" of the pupils would be enriched.³⁹ According to Miller:

The schools must become a more democratic place if we are to succeed with our educational aims. We must recognize that, as the recipients of our educational process, students can be a most important source of relevant feedback. They need to be actively engaged in co-operative practices as soon as they enter school. Children who get used to taking part and bearing responsibility from the start, likely will continue to do so through adult life. The co-influence of students with the responsibility for shaping the school environment can become a natural thing...Our teachers as well, Mr. Chairman, must move from the fringe to the heart of the decision-making in the school...The teacher must not only be concerned with how he works but with the shape and the pattern of the curriculum he teaches and with the whole operation and policy of the school in which he operates. Students, parents, and teachers must play a role in the decision-making that affects them.⁴⁰

Humanistic learning environments could be best accomplished in schools implementing the Montessori or "free school" philosophies

38 Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 15.

39 Ibid., p. 12.

40 Manitoba, Debates, 7 June 1971, pp. 1599-1600.

41

in "open area" classrooms.

The indications are that they [open area classrooms] have great value. The children in many areas respond in these open area classrooms, that [sic] it frees the teacher in many cases to concentrate more time with those who need special attention while others in the class can go ahead at their own pace, and it ties in very well with the whole concept of unlocking the school system in the sense that they'd be getting away from the 'lock-step' program and letting children go at their own pace depending upon their abilities and interests.⁴²

The provision of a learning climate that would encourage "creativity" was essential not only to intellectual development, but also to those activities that could serve students in the future to counter the growing passivity of mechanized life. Schools should teach children "not just how to do things, but how to enjoy life."⁴³

To achieve this, while schools might differ from one another in terms of curriculum, philosophy and organization, all should endorse the concept of educational "individualization." This implied, that wherever practical, students should be offered the

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The term "free school" implies a school wherein the characteristics of the traditional school such as grade promotion, set curriculum and discipline are replaced by non-graded progress, flexible interest-oriented curriculum and greater student freedoms. To facilitate the free school approach, "open area" schools are generally favoured. Open area designs normally involve the use of instruction areas larger than the conventional classroom to allow two or more classes to merge or subgroup and work upon various subject or activities simultaneously. Open area plans usually include a "resource centre" (multi-media library) in their layout as a major instructional aid.

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Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 20 April 1970, p. 1083.

43

Miller as cited in Winnipeg Tribune, 27 May 71.

possibility of selecting courses from the broadest possible range of choices. In 1972 Hanuschak explained that:

It is because of our appreciation and concern for the acceptance of the need for individuals to develop in their own personal direction that [sic] has prompted us to enrich the subject matter in our school curriculum in an attempt to make learning more meaningful and more purposeful.⁴⁴

Individualization also meant that the schools should allow pupils to progress at their own pace. The role of the teacher was to work and co-operate with students, guiding them along the various paths of development and discovery. The concept implied as well that school work should recognize that every child is an individual. This did not necessitate students working separately; but rather, class procedures should encourage individual study as well as group work. NDP spokesmen were unequivocal in stating that they were not interested in lowering pupil-teacher ratios but favoured instead a restructuring of educational practices within the schools.⁴⁶ It would be the teacher's task to identify the diverse needs and interests of each pupil and to stimulate those interests.

Accompanying individualization would be a new approach to student assessment. In the past, assessment had been overly concerned with memorized knowledge and skills.

An all-round student assessment should cover the attitude of the student to his work, his willingness to study, his ability to plan his work, to co-operate with his colleagues, to carry through a task he has undertaken and also to report the results. Assessment should not be limited to the concept of pass or fail, but should act as guide posts in the decision-making process of determining the pace of that individual student's progress and development.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Manitoba, Debates, 2 June 1972, p. 2619.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Miller, 7 June 1971, p. 1599.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Since standards of education were determined by forces, such as science and technology, over which the Department of Education had "absolutely no control," student evaluation was of limited use.⁴⁷

Satisfying student needs was more important than meeting admission requirements to external scholastic institutions.⁴⁸ Thus, evaluation should be "positive" and supportive rather than punitive.

In summation, the Manitoba NDP's educational philosophy during the period from 1969 to 1975 reflected a commitment to continuing education; a commitment to humanistic and flexible schools that would seek, first and foremost, to meet the needs of students as individuals; and a commitment to diversified learning experiences that could vary from one school to another. For many years the NDP had felt that one scholastic program could not benefit all students. In the past, the University Entrance program allegedly set the tone of the school system. It was considered "the" program and students who did not enter or remain in it were often regarded as inferior. Moreover, the party claimed that there was not a particular body of knowledge and skills that was useful to all students. The traditional task of providing a general education was now complicated by the responsibility of preparing students for life in an age of change. This required that education's goals be expanded beyond the teaching of communication

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Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 13 May 1974, pp. 3369, 3421.

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Manitoba, Core Report, p. 29.

and computational skills. Of equal importance was the encouragement of curiosity, critical and creative thinking, and the provision of opportunities for students,

a) to express and exercise originality and imagination and develop an aesthetic appreciation; b) to develop civic, social and moral responsibility and judgment; c) to develop knowledge and understanding of themselves, their fellowmen, their environment and a relationship among the three; d) to develop an appreciation for the importance of co-operation among people and the development of the necessary skills for co-operation; and 3) to acquire lifelong habits and attitudes that promote physical and intellectual development.⁴⁹

Throughout the period in question, NDP spokesmen repeatedly indicated concern for those they considered to be too long neglected in society. They rejected the notion that only the children of the privileged and academically oriented should or could be properly educated and claimed it was necessary to accommodate and encourage the individual and cultural differences which comprised the richness and strength of Manitoba's people.⁵⁰

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Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 7 April 1975, p. 997.

50

Ibid., p. 998.

CHAPTER IV
DECENTRALIZATION

In accordance with its philosophy of education, the Manitoba New Democratic Party once in power instituted a number of legislative and administrative changes to decentralize the public school system. These changes were the foundation of its educational policy for the years 1969-75. The concept of decentralization, in one form or another, permeated practically all of the government's educational policies.

Because the NDP was elected late in June of 1969, its first legislative session in the fall of that year, was simply a "clean up" session to complete the unfinished work of the previous government.¹ The main estimates passed were those originally presented by the Conservative administration in the spring of 1969 but not passed at that time due to the calling of the election. Thus, work began in earnest in 1970.

In that year, the passage of Bill 105 was the most significant initiative in the decentralization of Manitoba's public school system. It was both a major administrative and symbolic move which marked the end of an era and the beginning of another. Prior to this legislation there existed a High School Examination Board comprised of Departmental representatives, university representatives, Manitoba

¹ Manitoba, Debates, Wally Johannson MLA for St. Matthews, 14 August 1969, pp. 73-74.

Teachers' Society representatives and Ministerial appointees. By law the Board's duties were to:

- a) Set, conduct, and have the entire superintendence and control of, the examinations required to be taken by pupils attending Grade XI or Grade XII in the secondary schools of the province on leaving either of those grades, including, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, the appointment of examiners and the printing, distribution, and marking, of the examination papers; and
- b) set the standard on which recommendation to the minister and to the Senate of The University of Manitoba, the Senate of Brandon University, and to the Senate of University of Winnipeg is made for accrediting the standing of students not required to take the regular Grade XI and Grade XII examinations.²

Bill 105 abolished this High School Examination Board and transferred its responsibilities directly to provincial school divisions and schools. With the dissolution of the Board on 31 December 1970, after 42 years in operation, the responsibility for examinations at all levels, the setting and marking of examinations, the promotion of students, the retention of academic records and the preparation of academic transcripts for students leaving high school came to rest with the individual schools.³

A number of developments directly arose as a result of the abolition of external examinations. Effective January 1972, responsibility for the appraisal of secondary school credentials presented by students

² Manitoba, Laws, Statutes, etc., An Act Respecting The Department of Education, 1970, Revised Statutes of Manitoba vol. 1, E10, sec. 11 subsec. 1(a)(b).

³ Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 38; Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 22; Winnipeg Tribune, 10 September 1970.

entering Manitoban schools from other provinces or countries came to rest with the recipient school divisions and school districts. With the advent of subject, rather than grade promotion, the new government felt that the school accepting the student, rather than the Department of Education, would be in the best position to conduct appraisals.⁴

The Department of Education's once important Examinations Branch, which acted as the executive arm for the High School Examination Board, became a "Test Services" agency under the direction of the Planning and Research Branch in 1971 and its regulatory powers ceased.⁵ Shortly afterwards, Test Services lost its special status and the Planning and Research Branch took on the much diminished duty of pupil evaluation.⁶ Since the Branch sought to avoid a return to the "conformity imposed by the former Departmental examinations," pupil evaluation became dependent upon school division requests for assistance and it received a low priority.⁷ In subsequent years, Planning and Research's modest activities in the area of evaluation shifted to the evaluation of divisional school programs rather than student performance. Again, this involvement was of a consultative nature and by 1975 only a handful of Manitoba's forty-

⁴ Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 43.

⁵ Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 45.

⁶ Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 34.

⁷ Lionel Orlikow, "The First Year Report: Major Activities in Planning and Research, Department of Education," 12 April 1972, Department of Education files, Winnipeg, Manitoba; cf., Manitoba, Annual Reports 1970-76 regarding the Planning and Research Branch.

seven school divisions were interested in the new evaluation program⁸ which the Branch had been designing since 1973.

The abolition of Departmental examinations also resulted in Manitoba's universities amending their admission requirements to include the writing of Service for Admission to College and University (SACU) tests.⁹ Prior to 1971, SACU tests were required only when a student wished to enroll in a university outside of Manitoba which listed SACU scores as one of its entry requirements. As of January 1971, this became applicable to Manitoba as well and the Department of Education assumed the cost of ten dollars per pupil to cover the costs of those who were eligible to write the SACU tests.¹⁰ SACU scores in conjunction with school based academic records constituted university entrance requirements only for the school year 1971-72.¹¹ Beginning with the school year 1972-73, the payment of SACU test fees by the government ended and the use of SACU scores by the universities also terminated, leaving high school scores as the only criteria for university entrance. These high school scores were seldom based on examination performance since by 1972 the majority of Winnipeg's school divisions had ceased conducting final examinations of any sort.¹²

⁸ Manitoba, Annual Report 1975-76, p. 35; Idem, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 83.

⁹ Idem, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 38.

¹⁰ Manitoba, Department of Youth and Education, Bulletin 9 (November 1970):7.

¹¹ Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 15 April 1970, p. 958.

¹² Manitoba, Bulletin 10 (April 1972):3; Winnipeg Tribune 5 June 1972.

Another major step in the decentralization of Manitoba's school system in 1970 was the passage of Bill 59 which abolished the Department of Education's Attendance Branch. This legislation required that all school boards and school districts appoint an attendance officer and that all attendance reports, previously sent by schools to the Provincial Supervisor of School Attendance, be henceforth sent directly to a division or district attendance officer who reported, in turn, to the school board employing him.¹³ In short, as of September 1970 the supervision of school attendance became the exclusive responsibility of school boards along with the further responsibility of providing liaison with the federal Department of National Health and Welfare regarding family and youth allowances.¹⁴ School attendance officers, like their predecessors in the Attendance Branch, submitted regular reports to the federal government upon which family and youth allowances were contingent. The practice of withholding allowances for unsatisfactory attendance ceased in 1974.

Bill 104 which was also passed in 1970 permitted a "greater degree of flexibility" to school boards in delegating responsibilities to their administrative personnel.¹⁵ Specifically, school boards were now formally given the right to delegate the following powers

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Idem, Bulletin 10 (September 1971):1.

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 9; Manitoba, Bulletin 10 (September 1971):1.

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Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 19 June 1970, p. 3013.

to their superintendents:

- 1) the power to employ certain additional staff within limits;
- 2) the power to grant, alter or cancel exchange leave for teachers;
- 3) the power to appoint attendance officers;
- 4) the power to promote non-teaching staff within limits;
- 5) the power to select and grant leave to teachers for service with the Department of National Defence or Department of External Affairs;
- 6) the power to deal with municipal councils within limits regarding school sites; and
- 7) the power to approve payments in respect to routine contracts awarded, other than for new contracts, where the contracts have been satisfactorily completed.¹⁶

Prior to this legislation, superintendents were often in a position of conducting common school division business without authority and relying upon subsequent school board ratification.¹⁷ Bill 104 resolved this and encouraged administrative decentralization within school divisions.

In the 1971 legislative session, the NDP government took another step toward administrative decentralization with the passage of Bill 13. This bill altered the mechanism of financing the province's school system and in so doing, initiated the demise of Manitoba's "Foundation Program." Established in 1967 by the Roblin administration, the Foundation Program was an attempt to provide equal educational opportunity for students in all unitary

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Manitoba, Laws, Statutes, etc., An Act to Amend The Public Schools Act, 1970, 19 Eliz. 2, ch. 84, Acts of The Legislature of the Province of Manitoba, 1970.

¹⁷

Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 26 June 1970, p. 3367.

school divisions. The Program consisted of operational and capital grants by the provincial government to school divisions. These grants comprised a specific proportion of basic education costs including: teacher salaries; allowances for principals, supervisors, guidance counsellors, and superintendents; expenditures for instructional materials, maintenance, administration, library and reference books, texts and transportation; and capital expenditures related to school bus purchases and school construction. The Program was administered by the Public Schools Finance Board which received its funds from:

- a) two uniformly levied mill rates (one for nine mills on residential and farm assessment, and the other for thirty-three mills on commercial assessment), with the combined yield of these two mill rates providing 35 percent of the total Foundation grants; and
- b) the remaining 65 percent from the provincial treasury. Expenditures not included in the Foundation Program were a local responsibility and were to be raised by means of special levies in the municipalities forming part of the school division.

18 Beginning in 1971, however, school divisions received a grant of twelve dollars per pupil for the purpose of purchasing instructional materials through the Manitoba Textbook Bureau not only for textbooks, but also for a variety of teaching materials such as reference books, maps, films, filmstrips and

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Manitoba, Debates, George Johnson Progressive Conservative MLA for Gimli and Minister of Education, 20 January 1967, pp. 313-19.

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 recordings. Unlike the past when divisions were given textbooks free if selected from a list of prescribed textbooks from the Text-book Bureau, Bill 13 now gave divisions the liberty to purchase both print and non-print materials as they saw fit and if expenditures totalled less than the twelve dollars per pupil allotment, the unexpended balance would remain as a credit for subsequent years. Even more important, to keep up with rising costs, Bill 113 also introduced a new eighteen dollar per pupil "Block" grant over and above existing Foundation Program grants such as teacher or maintenance grants. In order to provide greater flexibility in funding allocation to school trustees, the NDP government chose to augment the Foundation Program by introducing a grant which was not specified for any particular use rather than increasing the amounts in the categorical grants.²⁰ In January 1973 this unconditional grant, intended to "free the hands" of school divisions, was increased to fifty dollars per pupil.²¹

Since it believed that controlling increasing education costs within the system's old "inflexible framework" would be impossible, the government proposed that one method of improving the quality of education inexpensively would be to encourage "differentiating staffing" innovations in the schools.²² Differentiating staffing

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 Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, pp. 9-11.

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 Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 28 April 1971, p. 413.

21
 Ibid., Hanuschak, 23 March 1973, p. 957.

22
 Ibid., Miller, 10 June 1971, p. 2784.

generally implied using lay persons to assist in schools by working as assistants to teachers with large classes or by performing clerical tasks. In the classroom, this meant a decentralization of the traditional role teachers held as the focal point of authority; and for the school division this meant the possibility of avoiding increased expenditures for the services of additional teachers, specialists and clerical staff. To facilitate differentiated staffing, the government passed Bill 71 which amended Section four of The Public Schools Act to include the following Subsection:

4(2) Subject to regulations made by the Minister, the board of trustees of a school division, school district or school area may authorize pupils to be left in the care and charge of school social workers, psychologists, teacher aides, student teachers, and other designated responsible persons as assigned by the principal without having a licensed teacher in attendance.²³

This amendment, which made Manitoba the first province in Canada to legislate the use of teacher aides, sanctioned and encouraged the use of non-teachers in schools.²⁴ Pleased with the growing use of both volunteers and paid teacher aides, Miller explained his purpose to the legislature in 1971:

What we're trying to do here, and what I think has to be done if we're going to tackle head on the question of the costs of education and improve the system without just pricing ourselves completely out of the market, is make it possible for the system to be more flexible and I think this is a step in the right direction.²⁵

²³ Manitoba, Bulletin 10 (October 1971):12.

²⁴ Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 46.

²⁵ Manitoba, Debates, 10 June 1971, p. 2784.

Also in the interest of financial decentralization, effective September 1970 the NDP government altered the grant regulations for all phases of special education for handicapped children. Subsequently, it became unnecessary for school divisions to categorize and segregate students in special classes in order to receive provincial grants. Prior to this change, grant regulations recognized only five types of handicaps and required that a minimum of ten children with the same handicap be placed in a special class. This excluded children with other disabilities and rural divisions, in particular, had difficulty meeting the grant requirements. The new funding arrangement enabled school divisions to employ specialists such as psychologists and encouraged the integration of handicapped children into regular classrooms.²⁶ As well, in 1975 mandatory legislation was introduced in the form of Bill 58 which held school boards responsible for "the education of all resident persons within a school district area or division who have the right to attend school, and who may require special programs."²⁷ Previously, school divisions had been responsible only for those children classified as mentally retarded leaving those with other disabilities the responsibility of the government. In recognition of the financial implications and the general unreadiness of school boards, however, the pertinent sections of Bill 58 were never proclaimed by the NDP government.

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 9; Winnipeg Tribune, 4 September 1970.

²⁷

Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 6 June 1975, p. 3589.

From 1969 to 1975, the policy of decentralization was also applied in the administration of the Department of Education. Several of its traditional functions were altered to harmonize with the concept that, "the strength of our educational system must be in the local school systems and from them to the schools and to the teachers and to an increasing degree to the students and to the community."²⁸ Specifically, the Department of Education adopted what was intended to be a supportive and facilitative role and abandoned many of its directive, regulatory functions. This shift in direction was most noticeable in the Curriculum and Inspection Branches. As of 1970, all Departmental curricular guidelines and publications became a "broad frame of reference rather than a narrow prescription" for teachers to follow.²⁹ The Curriculum Branch, once primarily responsible for reviewing and recommending textbooks for authorization, altered its focus to include more "supportive services" such as providing workshops, conferences and seminars to assist the professional development of teachers. At the same time, from 1969 to 1972 alone, the number of authorized textbooks listed by the Manitoba Textbook Bureau increased markedly from 545 to 1020 titles.³⁰ In terms of curriculum responsibility, a "new departure" was announced by Miller in 1970 when he stated that henceforth for curriculum design there

²⁸ Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 16.

³⁰ Cf., Manitoba, Annual Reports 1969-72. Subsequent Annual Reports provide no statistics in this regard.

would exist an "effective three-way partnership" between the province, the school divisions and the teachers.³¹ To break the Departmental monopoly of curricular decision-making, various "program working groups" primarily composed of nondepartmental educators were established within the Department of Education. Groups for such fields as elementary education, physical education, special needs and high school education were set up to recommend changes to the Minister of Education.³² At the same time, teachers were encouraged to "adapt courses to local conditions" and were assisted by Departmental committees and consultants in developing their own curriculum.³³

The role of the Inspection Branch was also transformed. School inspectors whose traditional responsibilities were to administer tests, to ensure that teachers followed the authorized curriculum and to report on teacher performance, were tacitly designated as moribund by the NDP government. In 1976 the Branch was disbanded and the roughly twenty employees were either reassigned, demoted or laid off.³⁴ The decline of the Inspection Branch cannot, however, be strictly attributed to the NDP government. As school division consolidation intensified in the 1960s, school divisions became capable of performing

³¹ Manitoba, Debates, 15 April 1960, p. 957.

³² Lionel Orlikow, "Innovation In a Bureaucracy: An Administrative Autobiography," December 1977, Manuscript, p. 68.

³³ Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 7 April 1975, p. 998.

³⁴ Winnipeg Free Press, 6 September 1976.



for themselves some of the tasks which inspectors had hitherto performed. Consequently inspectors had to formulate another role for themselves and beginning in 1966 regional group visitations by a team of inspectors replaced individual inspections of individual teachers.³⁵ By 1970, their number had declined by about one-fourth to thirty-two inspectors and their mandate had shifted from one of "teacher inspection to one of consultation, school or system evaluation and examination and assessment of programs."³⁶ In 1972 the Inspection Branch became the "Instruction and Supervisory Services Branch"³⁷ only to be renamed "Field Services" the following year. This latter appellation was ostensibly adopted to reflect the "new philosophy and direction" of the Branch since it now included team personnel such as reading consultants, home economists, and vocational specialists.³⁸

In summary, from 1969 to 1975 the NDP government pursued a policy of educational decentralization. The provincial Department's role was altered to become more supportive than regulatory; and responsibility for student evaluation, curriculum design, and general expenditures was assigned to local divisions. It was a fundamental

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1966-67, p. 26.

36

Idem, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 41.

37

Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 46.

38

Idem, Annual Report 1972-73, p. 73.

belief of the new government that centralization created a lack of flexibility and sensitivity to varying local needs and that schools would benefit from greater autonomy. Liberation of local initiative was believed to be a key to educational reform.

CHAPTER V

DEMOCRACY IN THE CLASSROOM

Consistent with its policy of decentralization and its philosophy of developing each child's potential according to his own abilities, from 1969 to 1975 the NDP government adopted a policy of "democratizing" the public schools.¹

Convinced that education must concern itself with the development of the "whole child" and not only the teaching of academic skills, it promoted what has been called a "progressive" philosophy of education.² Traditional education, according to this philosophy was characterized by the standardization of schools, teachers and curriculum; and by didactic, authoritarian teaching methods typified by the teacher standing in front of children sitting in orderly rows of desks while imparting facts which the docile pupils were required to learn.³ Schools were graded and pupil placement was chronological such that the child entered the first grade at the age of six, and if successful, graduated from grade twelve at the age of seventeen.

1
Manitoba, Reference Paper, chap. 3 passim.

2
The "progressive" philosophy of education is largely credited to the American philosopher, John Dewey (1859-1952), who criticized traditional educational systems for their regimentation and discipline which he alleged produced unquestioning and uncritical students. For his part, Dewey advocated a greater use of activity and experience in education capitalizing on student interests and initiatives.

3
Manitoba, Department of Education, Planning and Research Branch, Open Education? A Discussion of Changing Conditions in the Manitoba School System: Continuous Progress and Open Area, 1973, p. 6.

Students advanced one year at a time unless they failed to complete the year's work, in which case they had to repeat the grade.

This approach was viewed unfavourably by the NDP as being elitist and destructive for the majority of students.⁴ The progressive approach, in contrast, rested on democratic assumptions:

- 1) Since each child is an individual and individuals differ, classifying into grades according to age and performance was inappropriate;
- 2) Children have affective as well as intellectual facets which must be developed in order to cope better with life;
- 3) Each child learns in his own unique way thus making broad learning alternatives a necessity;
- 4) Children develop best if given trust, support and encouragement. Failing or grouping children according to ability is damaging to a child's self-concept;
- 5) Knowledge is man-made and subject to change; hence, it is inappropriate to emphasize acquisition of specific items in specific periods of time as a basis for the learning process.⁵

To enact these assumptions, the NDP government encouraged "individualization", "continuous progress" and "open education."

Schools were urged to individualize class programs wherever possible so that students would be offered a wide variety of course areas and levels.⁶

The continuous progress (or "non-graded") concept in-

⁴ Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 10 May 1974, p. 3368.

⁵ Manitoba, Open Education, p. 8.

⁶ Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 7 June 1971, p. 1596.

volved students working at their own pace and in a variety of student groupings to avoid the "damaging consequences of repeating a grade."⁷ Whereas students had traditionally been placed in and progressed with their class according to age and ability, continuous progress fostered heterogeneous rather than homogeneous groupings ostensibly to promote social understanding and to eschew elitism. Within this system, classes could be mixed with multi-age and various ability groupings working at different levels. Concern for academic achievement was coupled with social and personal development. "Streaming" students into distinctly different curricular programs at the secondary level according to ability, as was the case prior to 1970, was considered incompatible with the ideals of a democratic school system.

Likewise, according to Hanuschak, the open education concept promoted democratic rather than didactic learning activities:

The department has encouraged a school organization which allows for learning processes based on inquiry, discovery and research by the student, individual independence [sic] study, group instruction, small group interactions and active participation in the community. It has also recognized that the knowledge explosion in most subject fields indicated the futility of emphasizing only the gathering and memorizing of facts and details which used to be the goal of departmental examinations.⁸

Unlike the traditional approach which classified curriculum into subjects, grouped learners by ability, and viewed knowledge

⁷ Manitoba, Open Education, p. 8.

⁸ Manitoba, Debates, 7 April 1975, p. 998.

as the responsibility of the teacher, open education called for teacher and student to determine learning goals, activities and evaluation procedures together.

The NDP policy of democratization assumed that whereas in the past schools had concentrated on academic skills in the expectation that social skills would develop naturally, modern society now demanded that "parallel" emphasis be placed upon social skills to achieve a "balanced development."⁹ This meant stressing the process of learning rather than curriculum content and the encouragement of group co-operation to assist social adjustment.¹⁰ Within this context, the role of the principal included not only the supervision and co-ordination of school instruction, but also the task of making school "a happy experience for every girl, every boy, every teacher and all involved."¹¹ The role of the teacher became that of a guide and "facilitator" rather than a dispenser of information.¹² The teacher became an aid in the discovery of knowledge. Learning was to be "student centred." Students were to become participants in the planning of their education including their evaluation. According to G. Battershill, assistant to the then Deputy Minister Robert Dalton:

⁹ Manitoba, Reference Paper, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰ Manitoba, Debates, Miller 2 June 1962, p. 2612; Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 83.

¹¹ Manitoba, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 46.

¹² Ben Hanuschak, Address to the Manitoba Teachers' Society, 31 March 1975, p. 7. (Mimeographed).

Those who are to be evaluated must have a sizeable measure of control over the identification of tasks to be evaluated, the manner in which the evaluation is to be undertaken, and the resources required for the evaluation.¹³

To encourage responsibility, the school was to provide students with decision-making opportunities. Democracy and openness in the educational system were seen as methods of cultivating those qualities in individuals and thus improving society.

To realize their policy of democratizing the schools the NDP government took a number of significant steps. In September 1970, the Guidance Services Branch was renamed the Student Personnel Services Branch to reflect its new emphasis. Whereas in the past its main function was to provide materials to guidance teachers, in 1970 it became concerned more with meeting the problems of youth through "staff development."¹⁴ To do this, the Branch held conferences, in-services and work-shops stressing "a person centred approach" to education¹⁵ for guidance teachers and division officials.

Similarly, the following year a Professional Development Branch was created within the Department of Education. Its purpose was to assist school divisions in familiarizing teachers with new philosophies of education which rejected "the traditional task-oriented approach in favour of a more humanized approach which takes the needs of the pupil and the community into account."¹⁶ To fulfill its purpose,

¹³ Manitoba, Department of Education, Education Manitoba 1 (January 1975):2.

¹⁴ Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 22.

¹⁵ Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 29.

¹⁶ Manitoba, Annual Report 1972-73, p. 44; Idem, Education Manitoba 1 (December 1974):15.

the Branch provided in-services, courses and workshops stressing the importance of communication skills and variously entitled "Humanizing Education," "Transactional Analysis," "Group Processes in the Classroom," and "Two-Person Communication Skills."¹⁷ The reported purpose of these sessions was to "establish rapport and empathetic, relevant transactions which constitute the medium for helping children and those responsible for their education to grow toward a healthy, potent sense of self."¹⁸ A three-week kindergarten workshop in Fort Garry School Division in Winnipeg, for example, brought parents, teachers and children together to "let each see the other is human" and hence improve communication.¹⁹

The Department of Education also encouraged the revision of curriculum to reflect its democratic philosophy. In subject areas such as Mathematics and Science, there was a shift of emphasis from the mastery of facts to an understanding of concepts. At the elementary level in particular, teachers were urged to use an "experimental or inquiry approach to foster a child's natural curiosity."²⁰ For Social Studies, the Department prepared new courses in modern world history, for instance, "to cater to student interests."²¹ In English, (which came to be universally known as "Language Arts" in the early 1970s), the Department fostered the increased use of drama, music, and

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Idem, Education Manitoba 1 (February 1975):12.

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Idem, Education Manitoba 1 (December 1974):15.

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Winnipeg Tribune, 30 July 1973.

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 33.

21

Ibid.

other non-print stimuli. In 1973, for example, it hired two Drama teachers from England for an initial two-year period to "animate" Manitoba teachers to increase their use of theatre arts.²² Under NDP direction, the Department also promoted several trends in language education. With increased emphasis on oral communication, classrooms were often organized into discussion seminars. The old division of English into "Composition" and "Literature" was largely abandoned. There was a growing inclination to respect varieties of expression other than "standard" English, and to accept "informal" as well as "formal" writing. The teaching of formal grammar tended to be delayed until senior high school and often became optional rather than compulsory; while the teaching of literature tended to focus more on its emotional impact than on its form and structure. Teachers were advised to make increasing use of films and television in place of textbooks.²³ Evaluation, according to a Department guide, should stress the positive and original elements in students' writing rather than whether its form was strictly grammatical:

Outweighing all other principles for the construction of a good language arts program is the conviction that what children say is more important than the mechanics of how they say it.²⁴

Even lesser subjects such as Home Economics and Physical Education underwent review. In 1970, a revised non-prescriptive curriculum guide

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 11; Winnipeg Free Press, 1 January 1975.

23

Manitoba, Department of Education, Language Arts in Manitoba, 1974, pp. 11-14.

24

Ibid., p. 10.

for Physical Education was produced which promoted recreational activities such as snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, swimming and bowling. As well, in accordance with the concept of individualization, in some instances students selected their "Phys-Ed" activities from a list of electives. The chief intent of these changes was to meet the interests of all students rather than only those who were naturally athletic.²⁵ In 1974, a revised Home Economics program stressing social adjustment and "life skills" was introduced in Manitoba's junior high schools. The new curriculum was designed to cover not only the traditional study of nutrition and textiles but most important, the topic of interpersonal relations. The purpose of this change was to assist students in understanding the "interrelationship of self and others in a changing environment," and the concepts of "uniqueness of the individual" and the "socialization of individuals."²⁶

The Department of Education also abandoned streaming at the high school level. Program designations for high school streams (University Entrance, General etc.) were discarded within the first eight months of NDP administration and schools were urged to allow students to select their courses freely from the formerly separate patterns.²⁷ In 1973, the government's Core Committee reported that

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Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 53; Idem., Annual Report 1972-73, p. 83.

²⁶

Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (October 1974):19.

²⁷

Manitoba, Debates, Miller 15 April 1970, p. 957.

the goals of high school education in Manitoba should be changed to include the social and emotional, as well as intellectual, growth of students. To bring this about, the Committee claimed that a new high school framework was needed to foster student confidence, the ability to co-operate with others, a sense of personal and social values,²⁸ creative talents and intellectual skills. Thus, in 1973 the Department introduced a new "Revised High School Program" or "credit system" which, although not mandatory until September 1975, was widely adopted on a voluntary basis.²⁹

The new system was primarily intended to provide greater flexibility in timetabling and increased course options. Under the credit system, all courses or "credits" had an equal time allotment of 12 percent of the student's time or 180 minutes per week. In order to graduate, a student had to complete a minimum of twenty credits. The twenty credits were normally earned during the three years of high school formerly known as grades ten, eleven and twelve. Unlike the past, however, courses did not have to be taken at particular grade levels. During these three years, those students who previously formed the majority of the high school population, (University Entrance and General students), had to take three levels of English; two levels of Social Studies, Maths and Science; and one level of Physical

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Manitoba, Administrative Handbook 1974-75, p. 1.

29

Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 7 April 1975, p. 997.

Education. Thus there were ten compulsory courses and ten optional
 choices.³⁰ Innovations among the latter ranged from "film study"
 and "recreation and leadership," to "sociology" and "anthropology."
 These optional courses included those newly designed by the school
 as well as "student initiated projects" which students themselves
 devised to satisfy a special interest in such things as community
 studies, local history or even work experience.³¹ No more than three
 such projects per student were permissible. In keeping with the new
 system's emphasis on freedom, up to 20 percent of the school day was
 unassigned time left to the discretion of the school and student.³²
 Under the new credit system the minority of students who were interested
 in Business or Industrial education took fewer compulsory subjects
 than their classmates but were given a narrower selection of
 electives.³³

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The twenty credits could be earned by taking courses at a variety
 of levels:

- courses designed to prepare students for university studies (00)
- courses designed with a more practical or general orientation (01)
- courses designed to lead to careers in business (02), and industry (03)
- courses leading directly into jobs, and having a large component
 of work experience (04)
- courses designed with a specific interest focus (e.g. drama,
 computer science) (05)
- school initiated courses devised to meet local student interests (06)
- student initiated projects intended to meet individual interests (07)
- special credit for kinds of competence achieved outside the school
 system (e.g. Native languages, music option) (08).

31
 Manitoba, Department of Education, The Revised High School Program, [1974].

32
 Ibid.; see also Manitoba, Administrative Handbook 1974-75, pp. 2-5.

33
 For further details see Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (May 1975):14.

There were three major differences between the Revised High School Program and the structure which existed when the NDP came to power. First, the new program established equal time allotments of 12 percent for all courses; whereas in the past subjects received from 4 percent to 24 percent of a student's time, depending upon the importance of the subject and the grade level. For instance, under the earlier University Entrance Program, Guidance and Physical Education received 4 percent and 7 percent respectively in grades ten and eleven and were discontinued in grade twelve; while English received 18 percent in grades ten and eleven and 24 percent in grade twelve. The credit system, in contrast, allotted 12 percent to all courses at whatever level. This implied that in the case of English a university-bound student received 24 percent less instruction in English over three years than did a student under the old program. In the case of Mathematics, under the University Entrance Program students spent 12 percent of their class time in grades ten and eleven and 18 percent of their time in grade twelve in Maths instruction. Under the credit system, a university-bound student did not need to take more than two 12 percent credits within three years. This meant that, unless a student chose to take additional high school Maths instruction, he received 18 percent less instruction over three years. As between the earlier General Program and the credit program there was also a reduction of student instruction time in English and Mathematics, but to a lesser degree. Time spent on other core subjects, such as Social Studies (History and Geography), was

not altered by the credit system.³⁴ Second, the number of options significantly increased under the credit system. Under the old system, for example, University Entrance students in three years spent 41 percent of their time taking optional courses selected from a Department curriculum list. Under the credit system, students spent 50 percent of their instruction time in optional courses which included both school designed and student initiated courses.³⁵ Third, the credit system provided students up to 20 percent unassigned time whereas under the previous system the maximum unassigned time was 16 percent.³⁶

After the abandonment of streaming in 1970, most junior and senior high schools introduced numerous course changes. The variety grew yearly with Departmental encouragement of new courses such as Labour Education and Political Science. This expansionary trend climaxed in 1973 with the Revised High School Program whereby subjects became available to students at a number of levels of difficulty.³⁷ Compulsory courses such as English and Mathematics were allotted less instruction time and student interest shifted from previously compulsory courses to more novel electives. Programs now differed

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Cf., Manitoba, Administrative Handbook 1968-69, pp. 7-8; Idem, Administrative Handbook 1974-75, pp. 1-5.

35

Ibid.

36

Manitoba, Administrative Handbook 1968-69, p. 3.

37

Idem, Annual Report 1972-73, p. 25.

greatly from school to school, with the proliferation of original and unconventional courses. By 1975, according to one estimate, there were 225 school designed courses and 150 student initiated projects.³⁸ In short, during the period from 1969 to 1975 students and teachers were given an unprecedented opportunity to fashion the educational program.

Meanwhile, Manitoba's universities reduced their entrance requirements to adapt to the changes taking place. The school year 1969-70 was the last in which students were required to write Department examinations and have satisfactorily completed second language requirements in order to enter university. The universities now came to accept grade twelve standing in two General courses (01 level) in combination with three University Entrance courses (00 level).³⁹ In 1974, entrance to university was further relaxed with the minimum requirement being the three University Entrance courses and any two other grade twelve courses approved by the Department of Education.⁴⁰

Also in keeping with its policy of democratizing the school system, the NDP government opened six new regional secondary high schools in 1971-72. They were located in Dauphin, Selkirk, Swan River, Steinbach and Winnipeg. These "comprehensive" schools

³⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, 4 June 1976.

³⁹ University of Manitoba, University of Manitoba General Calendar 1969-70 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1968), pp. 15-16.

⁴⁰ Idem, University of Manitoba General Calendar 1974-75, p. 15.

avowedly embodied the concept of one school for everyone.⁴¹ The comprehensive school model assumed that it was socially inappropriate to separate students into academic or vocational schools. Rather, students of diverse abilities should be given the opportunity to interact in order to develop mutual understanding and tolerance. According to the NDP government, regional secondary schools would serve "to integrate youth into one group of young citizens, and makes them realize that, despite varying interests and aptitudes, each one has a contribution to make in this society."⁴²

In addition to comprehensive schools, under the Schreyer administration open area classroom and school designs became popular in the construction of new schools and the remodelling of older buildings. Planning for 1970, the Department of Education had twenty-seven open area schools on the drawing board.⁴³ Open area plans, like the comprehensive school concept, encouraged variations in the size and composition of student groups and were associated with progressive teaching methods.

The most obvious effect of the NDP government's policy of democratizing Manitoba's public school system was the making of schools more informal. During the period from 1969 to 1975 there were fewer rules and regulations in schools than there had ever been

41
Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 2 June 1972, p. 2619.

42
Manitoba, Bulletin 11 (June 1973):2.

43
Winnipeg Free Press, 13 December 1969.

before. Teachers dressed less formally and student dress codes vanished. As late as 1969 students in Winnipeg School Division Number One, Winnipeg's largest school division, were subject to dress and appearance codes. Girls were not allowed to wear pants during school; and boys were not allowed to sport beards, moustaches, or hair which covered their shirt collar. By 1975 the only restrictions on school dress were "bikinis and bare feet" and long hair, beards, and moustaches were commonplace.⁴⁴ Pupil-teacher relations also became more casual as some teachers encouraged students to address them by their first names. Student evaluation was made less "traumatic" by the abandonment of methods which compared students in relation to their peers and the adoption of methods which compared a pupil's achievement in relation to his "potential." The use of final examinations and percentile grades was generally replaced by reliance on classroom work and short tests which were reported to parents in more frequent interviews, narrative descriptions or letter grades.⁴⁵ The enforcement of discipline in the form of detention or strapping was discouraged and became a rarity.⁴⁶

During the NDP government's first five and a half years in office education underwent a "deluge" of change.⁴⁷ The Department

44
Idem, 30 December 1975.

45
Idem, 30 March 1973.

46
Idem, 12 June 1973.

47
Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (October 1974):2.

of Education discarded its regulatory role. Curriculum was broadened. High school programs were made more flexible and school construction was designed to avoid elitism. In the spirit of democracy, "a more pluralistic approach began to permeat ⁴⁸ [sic] education.

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Ibid.

CHAPTER VI
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

During the period from 1969 to 1975 the New Democratic government of Manitoba viewed education as a broad "social service function" capable of both responding to diverse community needs and potentially reforming society.¹ To this end, the Schreyer administration adopted a community schools policy which sought to increase the participation of local residents, particularly parents, in the use and direction of their schools.

The government was intent on decentralizing education by strengthening local autonomy because it felt that education had become so bureaucratized that parents were no longer able to influence the schooling process. To remedy this, it promoted the concept of the community school, which, as the only public building available in every community, could become a distribution centre for social, recreational and educational services. The school should be a "multi-use unit with the teaching of children only one use of the building."²

In addition to the increased use of school facilities by local residents, the government advocated the use of local people as volunteer teacher aides or as paid "paraprofessionals" to potentially cut school costs while enriching school curriculum with their special knowledge or skills. According to Miller, "the parents and other

¹ Manitoba, Annual Report 1973-74, p. v.

² Idem, Reference Paper, p. 27.

³ Manitoba, Department of Education, Planning and Research Branch, "Community Participation in Education," July 1975, p. 1.

members of the community are important repositories of learning situations which cannot be lost to our educational system."³ The community schools policy also included the reciprocal idea that while the community should be encouraged to enter the school, students should be encouraged to enter the community and receive training and knowledge from such sources as local craftsmen, businesses, and museums. Since the school could only supply a portion of the experiences leading to the development of a truly educated person,⁴ the ultimate setting for the learner would be an educative community.

In its most advanced stage, the government's policy called for the adoption of a "social advocacy" role by the school. Students and school personnel should attempt to resolve community problems by becoming "information and analytical resources."⁵ To accompany this wider range of activities, the NDP government subscribed to the redistribution of decision-making powers and favoured the establishment of local school councils or advisory committees composed of residents, teachers, pupils and parents. The purpose of these committees was to provide local input to school curriculum, discipline, social activities and other matters. In some cases, it was expected that they would play an important advisory role in the actual administration of the school such as the hiring or transferring of teachers.⁶ According to Miller, the "ultimate aim must be to fashion a real working community

⁴ Manitoba, Reference Paper, pp. 17, 27; see also Idem, A Study of the Community Use of Schools, vol. 1, 1974, pp. 2-4.

⁵ Idem, Reference Paper, p. 21.

⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

in and about the schools."⁷

The philosophical interest of the Schreyer administration in community schools was reinforced by the scant parental involvement in education which existed when the NDP came to power. The existence of only one high school home and school association in Winnipeg in 1970 appalled the new government. In fact, this lack of parental participation prompted it to consider legislating the creation of advisory councils composed of students, parents and teachers for every secondary school in Manitoba.⁸ At the same time, the Manitoba Home and School Parent-Teacher Federation, likewise concerned about home and school associations, requested the appointment of a Department officer responsible for the establishment of more associations.⁹ In 1973, the Federation revealed that its membership had declined to three thousand from ten thousand in 1960 and urged the government to provide two hundred dollars to every school division for the formation of school advisory committees.¹⁰

Although the NDP government rejected this particular request, it did take other steps. Education consultants actively assisted teachers and parents to develop local curriculum.¹¹ In Winnipeg S.D.,

⁷ Manitoba, Debates, 7 June 1971, p. 1600.

⁸ Ibid., 16 April 1970, p.1006.

⁹ Winnipeg Free Press, 17 April 1970.

¹⁰ Winnipeg Tribune, 6 February 1973; Idem, 17 February 1973.

¹¹ Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 7 April 1975, p. 998.

for example, a group of parents from William Whyte school located in Winnipeg's low-income "North End," were funded to write textbooks based upon their neighborhood. The purpose was to provide "relevant" reading material to replace the "Dick and Jane" readers which were alien to the school's large Native and ethnic populations.¹²

Reportedly, these books were well received by the students who were able to identify the characters and locations in the stories and consequently no longer found reading a "chore."¹³

Beginning in 1971, the Department offered "Demonstration" grants to schools, school divisions and school districts for projects pertaining to community involvement in schools. The aim of these normally one or two-year grants was to demonstrate to other schools and divisions the benefits of innovation. Rolling River School Division, in South-Western Manitoba, was funded to evaluate the ratio of teachers, paraprofessionals and volunteers in its school program and to recruit additional volunteers. Boundary School Division, located in Manitoba's South-Eastern corner, was given a grant to investigate the educational aspirations of one of its communities and to assist that community in reorganizing an existing school into a community school. Churchill School District, in Manitoba's far North, received funds for an experiment entitled "EDUCOM" to foster citizen participation through the inservice training of teachers and the creation of a citizens' advisory council. Directly south of

¹² Winnipeg Tribune, 30 May 1975.

¹³ Idem, 29 October 1975.

Winnipeg, in Morris-MacDonald School Division, advisory committees were set up in two rural schools. In the town of Morris, local carpenters, electricians and sheet-metal workers were engaged to teach their skills to boys who could not cope with regular school programs. Winnipeg S.D. received funds for one school to institute an early childhood pre-school project using parent volunteers. In Transcona-Springfield School Division, in Winnipeg, a "work-activity" project was given ten thousand dollars to educate potential school dropouts in a work setting. The Division purchased a dilapidated house and the students renovated it under the direction of skilled union
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 personnel.

Volunteer and paraprofessional projects were also financed by the Schreyer administration to promote citizen participation in schools. In 1971 the Planning and Research Branch initiated a volunteer teacher aide program which involved nine of Winnipeg's ten school divisions. Under this program, the Branch recruited citizens to act as volunteer aides. By 1972, largely due to this program, there were 2077 volunteers of diverse ages, skills and backgrounds active in the participating divisions.
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 In addition to this volunteer program, in 1971 the government began a Native paraprofessionals program which paid the salaries of Indian and Metis aides who worked in schools with

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, pp. 35-36; Winnipeg Tribune, 14 February 1972.

15

Manitoba, Department of Education, Planning and Research Branch, "Volunteer Teacher Aides 1972"; Idem, A Booklet For The Use Of The Classroom Teacher In Utilizing The Services Of A Volunteer Teacher Aid, n.d., p. 8.

Native children and their parents. The aides, often acting as language interpreters, provided "liaison" between teachers, pupils and parents. By 1975 there were sixty such aides in fourteen school divisions and four school districts across Manitoba.¹⁶

The Department of Education was directly involved in the establishment of community schools in urban core areas. In September 1974 an Urban Education Section was created within Planning and Research to respond to educational problems arising from "inner-city" conditions associated with poverty.¹⁷ The activities of "Urban Ed" hinged upon the promotion of the community school concept and the Section had two major projects -- "Schools for Urban Neighbourhoods" (SUN) and "Community Assessment Program" (CAP). SUN was a three-year Demonstration project begun in 1975 to create "neighbourhood oriented education programs."¹⁸ It operated in Dufferin and Norquay elementary schools in Winnipeg S.D. and in David Livingstone elementary school in Brandon School Division. Each of the three inner-city schools had an Urban Ed community worker who organized and then assisted a residents' advisory committee. These three committees held regular meetings to discuss school affairs and operated such activities as community newsletters, drop-in centres, evening sewing classes,

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For further detail see Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (April 1975):14.

17

Idem, 3 (December 1976):6.

18

Ibid.; Manitoba, Department of Education, Evaluation, Research and Policy Analysis (ERPA), formerly the Planning and Research Branch, "1976-77 Budget Proposal."

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tutoring, community dinners and hobbies for senior citizens.

The CAP project also began in 1975, but unlike SUN, it emphasized a dominant community role in the actual governance of the school. If the government's policy, during this period, anywhere approximated its full concept of the community school, it was in William Whyte, Machray and Shaughnessy Park elementary schools in Winnipeg School Division. Each school had an elected or volunteer advisory committee composed of local residents who actively participated with school staff in the setting of school policy, school budgeting, curriculum, and staffing.²⁰ With the assistance of federal "Local Initiatives" grants, two of the three community committees were able to employ a total of thirteen full-time teacher aides for their schools to supplement the volunteers who were present in all three schools.²¹ Urban Ed's community workers assisted the committees in organizing adult education classes, community newsletters, a used clothing depot, a welcoming team for the benefit of new families and political action meetings with area politicians to demand better recreational facilities.²² The Winnipeg School Board was supportive of the CAP project and conferred the special status of

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Manitoba, ERPA, "1976-77 Budget Proposal."

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Ibid.; Winnipeg Tribune, 29 October 1975.

21

Winnipeg Tribune, 30 May 1975; Idem, 6 February 1976.

22

Manitoba, ERPA, "Machray School CAP Program," (n.d.).

"community school" upon the three schools to accommodate the project. The Division's Superintendent, Howard Loewen, favoured the project since it "decentralized" education and Assistant Superintendent Keith Cooper was "beside himself with enthusiasm."²³

In 1973 the Department of Education implemented a two-year experimental program entitled the "Rural Education Alternative Program" (REAP).²⁴ This community program was interlinked with the NDP government's "Stay Option" policy of economic development which sought to arrest rural depopulation prompted by economic or social forces related to inadequate government assistance.²⁵ Because the 1960s were characterized by rural school district consolidation involving the construction of large schools in the more populated centres capable of offering numerous curricular options, small schools and eventually small towns were closing.²⁶ REAP was an attempt to illustrate that through the harnessing of community resources, small schools could provide the programs and options available in larger schools in distant centres. With REAP, the Schreyer administration hoped to foster both equality of educational opportunity and a responsiveness to local needs.²⁷ The program involved two components -- a

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Winnipeg Tribune, 5 June 1976; Idem, 30 May 1975; Idem, 23 August 1975.

24

Manitoba, Education Manitoba 12 (February 1974):3.

25

Manitoba, Guidelines For The Seventies (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1973), vol. 2, chap. 11 passim.

26

Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 8 May 1974, p. 3248.

27

Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (January 1975):8.

contractual agreement for rural divisions which had a large number of small schools, and smaller individual grants to assist other qualifying school divisions.²⁸ Eight divisions joined REAP under contractual agreements: Tiger Hills, Turtle Mountain, Midland, Morris-Macdonald, Rhineland, White Horse Plain, Evergreen and Lakeshore. All were within two hundred miles of Winnipeg and except for Evergreen and Lakeshore which lay to the north, these divisions were located south-west of the city. The program had an annual budget of \$250,000 from which the eight divisions hired full-time project directors and implemented changes intended to enhance the quality of education.²⁹ In Tiger Hills S.D., for instance, a "4-H" program using community volunteers was established in the town of Pilot Mound. In Fisher Branch, REAP assisted Lakeshore S.D. to set up an agriculture course wherein students spent half of their instruction time visiting surrounding farms. In Turtle Mountain S.D., rather than being bused to a larger school in a distant centre, students in the town of Ninette studied shop courses such as autobody repair,³⁰ electronics, and carpentry in town businesses.

The Department of Education also became increasingly involved in the provision of social and clinical services to school

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Idem, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 81.

29

Idem, Education Manitoba 1(January 1975):6.

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Ibid.; for a comprehensive study of REAP see Manitoba, Department of Education, Planning and Research Branch, "Evaluation: Rural Educational Alternatives Program," by Robert Regnier, 1975.

communities. In April 1972 the Child Development Services Branch (CDS), established in the Manitoba Department of Health and Social Development in 1966, was transferred to the Department of Education.³¹ The function of CDS was to duplicate rurally the service provided by the Winnipeg Child Guidance Clinic, specifically the provision of reading clinicians, audiologists, speech therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers to participating school divisions.³² Until 1972, CDS provided itinerant clinical services through the Brandon and Selkirk mental hospitals and the Manitoba Home in Portage la Prairie.³³ Dissatisfied, however, with the level of services available to rural and Northern Manitoba, the NDP government increased the number of available specialists through recruitment, bursary and sabbatical incentives. It also established two Demonstration projects in The Pas and Interlake regions to illustrate a new approach using community participation which integrated, rather than institutionalized children with emotional, social and physical impairments to learning.³⁴ Thus, through the training of teachers, parents and volunteers, CDS extended its services. By 1975 Manitoba was administratively divided into five regions and the Branch's staff had increased from three to

³¹ Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 7.

³² The Winnipeg Child Guidance Clinic is administered by the Winnipeg School Division but is funded jointly by the provincial government and Winnipeg's ten school divisions. Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 7.

³³ Idem, Education Manitoba 1 (November 1974):9.

³⁴ Ibid.

35
 sixty-five. Whereas in 1972 CDS was responsible for eight thousand
 children, by 1975 it was responsible for fifty thousand.³⁶

During the period from 1969 to 1975, community participation
 in schools gained substantial acceptance in Manitoba. In 1970,
 Manitoba's second largest city, Brandon, signed a joint-use agreement
 with Brandon School Division which allowed both levels of civic
 administration to utilize certain of each other's facilities.³⁷ In
 1974, the City of Winnipeg entered into similar contractual
 relations with its ten school divisions.³⁸ In rural areas, joint-
 use agreements between municipalities and school divisions likewise
 became popular.³⁹ In some instances, joint-use agreements led to
 joint construction of new schools. Lord Selkirk, Machray and King
 Edward elementary schools in Winnipeg S.D. were constructed in this
 fashion.⁴⁰ In the case of Machray school, for example, the City of
 Winnipeg provided \$100,000 for the construction of the school gym.⁴¹
 As well, by 1974 there were approximately five thousand volunteers

35
 Keven Van Camp, "The Shaping Of Policy For The Delivery Of Service
 To Special Children: The Pressure Group Forces, With A Focus On
 The Manitoba Department Of Education," A Research Paper in 19:723
 Selected Topics In Political Analysis, University of Manitoba,
 April 1979, p. 23.

36
 Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 7 April 1975, p. 999.

37
Winnipeg Tribune, 2 July 1970.

38
 Idem, 12 June 1973; Idem, 24 December 1974.

39
Winnipeg Free Press, 29 September 1973.

40
Winnipeg Tribune, 27 February 1974.

41
 Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (November 1974):7.

42
 assisting in 280 schools across Manitoba. By the following year,
 in Winnipeg S.D. alone, forty-eight resident advisory committees
 existed at both the elementary and secondary levels.⁴³ Pleased with
 the progress of its community schools policy, the NDP government
 increased its support after 1975. Thus, in 1977, the NDP's last
 year in office, the government introduced "Parent Council" grants to
 provide as much as four hundred dollars per school to promote
 community participation in Manitoba's educational system.⁴⁴

42
Winnipeg Free Press, 20 April 1974.

43
 Winnipeg School Division Number One, Our Schools
 4 (June 1976):23.

44
Manitoba, Education Manitoba 4 (September-October 1977):30-31.
 These grants were never distributed because they were abolished
 by the Progressive Conservative government which took office
 in October 1977. Winnipeg Tribune, 1 February 1979.

CHAPTER VII
EXPERIMENTATION

The Manitoba NDP has traditionally held a strong belief in the necessity of extending government planning as a vehicle for the amelioration of social problems. This importance placed upon planning pertained not only to the management of the economy, but to the realm of social services as well. Thus, it was understandable that the NDP government of Manitoba came to rely heavily upon the Department of Education's Planning and Research Branch to reform the public school system.

The adoption of an educational research and experimentation policy was not unexpected. Prior to forming the government, the NDP persistently criticized the Weir administration for its lack of research. In the legislature, Doern accused the government's Directorate of Research and Planning of being "insufficient" and called it a "joke."¹ He decried the fact that in 1969 the government spent less than one-tenth of 1 percent of its education budget on research (\$103,000 of \$150,000,000); and claimed that ten times that amount was needed.² Miller lauded the efforts of school divisions who initiated experimental programs despite the lack of interest on the part of the government.³ Hanuschak demanded that a research branch be established

¹ Manitoba, Debates, 24 January 1967, p. 417; Ibid., 23 January 1967, p. 360.

² Ibid., 7 April 1969, p. 1048; Ibid., 23 January 1967, p. 360.

³ Ibid., 23 January 1967, p. 369.

to do more than primarily concern itself with school facility statistics. He argued that a research branch should keep abreast of environmental and sociological changes and be able to respond with suitable programs.⁴ Moreover, he claimed that it was the government's responsibility to financially assist any school division⁵ involved in experimentation.

Once in power, the new government made clear its intention to expand educational research and planning in a "major way."⁶ According to Miller, educational planning was to be "future-oriented" and "action-centred."⁷ Expanding the research capacity of the Department of Education was to cut costs and to encourage innovation.⁸ In 1969, however, the NDP inherited a small Directorate of Research and Planning which was primarily involved in the data processing of statistical information for school divisions. The practice of offering research grants to school divisions, although begun in 1968, was generally limited to projects of a technical-statistical nature such as the development of a system for evaluating second language learning using electronic recording equipment.⁹

⁴ Ibid., 14 May 1968, p. 1980.

⁵ Ibid., 7 April 1969, p. 1050.

⁶ Ibid., Throne Speech, 7 April 1971, p. 6.

⁷ Ibid., 7 June 1971, p. 1601.

⁸ Ibid., Throne Speech, 9 March 1972, p. 4; Ibid., Miller, 11 June 1971, p. 1751.

⁹ Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 35.

The formation of a new research branch began in 1970 with the decision of the Schreyer administration to allocate a quarter of a million dollars for special projects to benefit educationally disadvantaged groups.¹⁰ It was the belief of the government that the traditional definition of equality of opportunity -- equal treatment for all in a free public school system, was inadequate.¹¹ Moreover, Miller personally felt that the government needed to make major changes in education in order to be re-elected.¹² Thus, in April 1971 the Directorate of Research and Planning became the Planning and Research Branch headed by a new Assistant Deputy Minister, Dr. Lionel Orlikow. It was Orlikow who, while serving as a "Human Development Consultant" in the government's "Planning Secretariat," championed the idea of reconstituting and expanding the old research branch.¹³

Orlikow was an educator by profession. He held degrees from the Universities of Manitoba, Harvard and Chicago. In the course of his studies at the University of Manitoba he became acquainted with Schreyer.¹⁴ Later, he taught in Manitoba from 1956-63 and from 1965-67. He also worked as a researcher for the federal government's Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and as a professor at the Ontario

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Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," pp. 18-19.

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Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 15 April 1970, p. 956.

12

Van Camp, "Pressure Group Forces," p. 20.

13

Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," pp. 18-19.

14

Winnipeg Free Press, 25 September 1975.

Institute for Studies In Education. Orlikow was a well known supporter of the NDP and ran unsuccessfully in the 1966 provincial election as a party candidate. Orlikow was not a typical appointee. "He carried with him a reputation for openly questioning the established order of institutions in which he was involved."¹⁵ In 1973, for instance, at a conference for the Manitoba Association of Principals and Vice-Principals, Orlikow suggested to the delegates that the role of the principal in modern education had become "irrelevant." According to Orlikow, schools could be administered by teachers in committee or on a teacher rotation basis. The delegates were reportedly less than enthusiastic about this idea.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the government was determined to induce change in education and maintained that it was part of Orlikow's job to "create debate."¹⁷ In establishing Planning and Research, the government believed that it had "deliberately planted the seed of agitation to spur people."¹⁸ Bypassing senior civil servants within the Department of Education, the Schreyer government appointed Orlikow associate deputy minister in 1973 and finally deputy minister of education in 1975.¹⁹ These promotions disturbed many civil servants and educators. Orlikow's Departmental career was filled with political and administrative intrigue to a fair degree. Reportedly both former deputy ministers of education, Dr. Wesley Lorimer and

¹⁵ Van Camp, "Pressure Group Forces," p. 20.

¹⁶ Winnipeg Tribune, 24 February 1973.

¹⁷ Winnipeg Free Press, 11 April 1973.

¹⁸ Idem, 10 April 1972.

¹⁹ Manitoba, Education Manitoba 2(December 1975):8.

Robert Dalton, left the Department because of the growing power given to Orlikow.²⁰ At one point, the Department's Information Officer and editor of Education Manitoba, George Friesen, resigned in protest of Orlikow's alleged political abuses in the hiring and advancement of Department staff and demanded that Schreyer investigate.²¹ According to Donald Craik, Conservative MLA for Riel and former Minister of Education from 1968-69, school division officials resented Orlikow's appointment in 1975 but were too "scared" to protest. He claimed they well understood that Orlikow would now "virtually take over" since Hanuschak was "weak."²² Despite the increase in his responsibilities with each promotion, however, at no time did Orlikow relinquish his firm control over Planning and Research. He did not allow himself to become merely the titular senior administrator for the Branch; rather, he retained an intimate supervisory involvement over all its activities. The Branch's succession of directors and acting-directors had little, if any, power and were normally circumvented by Orlikow who preferred to communicate directly with individual staff members.²³

At its zenith in 1974-75, Planning and Research had a staff of more than sixty and a budget of several million dollars.²⁴

²⁰ Winnipeg Tribune, 12 September 1975.

²¹ Winnipeg Free Press, 10 September 1975.

²² Winnipeg Tribune, 1 October 1975.

²³ Personal knowledge.

²⁴ Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," p.20.

Its list of projects, experiments and studies numbered more than
²⁵ one hundred major items. Planning and Research can be credited,
 or blamed, for practically all of the major changes made in
 Manitoba's educational system from 1971 to 1975. Within three years
 of its formation, five other branches were created and institutionalized
 within the Department of Education and the Department of Colleges and
 University Affairs (the two had been officially united from 1968-1971)
 out of the original core of the Planning and Research Branch. These
 five branches were: New Careers, Special Projects, Focus, Native
²⁶ Education and Le Bureau De L'Education Française.

The Branch was involved in four basic elements of public
 policy making. It formulated proposals for submission to the Minister
 of Education, the cabinet and cabinet committees. It adopted policies
 set by the three aforementioned bodies. It implemented projects and
²⁷ programs; and later, it evaluated them. Those which were positively
 evaluated by the Branch were then transferred to other Department
 branches. This freed Planning and Research to concentrate on innovation
 rather than maintenance.

According to Orlikow, the Branch never presented a clear,
 concise statement of its objectives because NDP "politicians...want
²⁸ some running room." Nonetheless, the Branch's activities illustrated
 its major concerns as the provision of increased assistance to
 disadvantaged groups; the utilization of education as a vehicle for

²⁵ Manitoba, Department of Education, ERPA, Memorandum, 25 February 1977.

²⁶ Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," p. 20.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁸ Orlikow as cited in Winnipeg Free Press, 22 November 1975.

social change; and the decentralization of decision-making in the educational process.²⁹

The NDP government implemented its policy of experimentation primarily by providing Demonstration or "Innovation" grants to teachers, schools, school divisions, and other educational bodies; and by establishing Departmental projects and programs aimed at ameliorating specific problems. With the formation of a reconstituted Planning and Research Branch in 1971, Miller announced the availability of an initial \$200,000 in Demonstration grants for projects of a "progressive and innovative nature."³⁰ These grants were available until 1976 and priority was given to teacher initiated projects,³¹ and projects related to organizational rather than curricular changes. The intent was to encourage experimentation particularly where traditional teaching methods predominated. The zeal of the government to promote innovation was illustrated by the fact that every public school in Manitoba was sent grant application forms "in the hope of a favourable response."³²

The government funded a wide variety of projects which often included continuous progress, open area, individualization

²⁹ Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography, p. 31.

³⁰ Manitoba, Education Manitoba 10 (October 1971):4.

³¹ Idem, 1 (December 1974):16; Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," p. 62.

³² Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (December 1974):16.

and heterogeneous groupings. From 1972 to 1975 Walter Whyte school in Lord Selkirk S.D. operated a non-graded kindergarten to grade nine program based on individualized instruction, community volunteer participation, multi-aged groupings, and "cross-age tutoring" where older children taught younger students.³³ The school's non-graded approach emphasized "the needs of the individual and an acceptance of the student as he is, not as he should be according to an age or grade standard."³⁴ Norquay school in Winnipeg S.D. experimented with an open area program which allowed five, six and seven year olds to choose what they wanted to learn. The project utilized a "quiet room," a "body lab," and a "block and woodwork" room. The children were "turned loose" to select their own activities and reportedly came to school early because it was "fun."³⁵ Two Portage la Prairie teachers in White Horse Plain S.D. received a Demonstration grant for a creative writing project which merged grade eleven students with grade five students to "write poetry, present one act dramas and appreciate literary style."³⁶

Projects involving differentiated staffing and professional development also received grants. Nine differentiated staffing projects in seven school divisions received a total of \$335,000 in

33

Idem, 1 (February 1975):6.

34

Idem, 1 (October 1974):6.

35

Idem, 1 (February 1975):5.

36

Ibid., p. 4.

the first two years alone that grants became available.³⁷ The recipients of differentiated staffing funds were mainly Winnipeg school divisions. Intermountain School Division, located adjacent to the Saskatchewan border, however, was one rural division which received the annual grants until 1975.³⁸ The government financed differentiated staffing experiments involving such approaches as team teaching, heterogeneous groupings and the use of teacher aides. Professional development and the production of audiovisual materials were often part of these projects. Numerous schools and school divisions received grants to increase community participation with paraprofessionals, volunteers and parent advisory committees.³⁹ In Frontier School Division, Manitoba's northernmost division, and Rolling River S.D., four schools received grants from 1971 to 1973 for "confluent education" projects. Confluent education, according to the Department of Education, was "an approach to learning and teaching which seeks to integrate the affective with the cognitive domains."⁴⁰ Confluent education ostensibly sought to abolish the "unnatural division" between feelings and learning typified by the inordinate amount of energy used to keep schools "orderly and quiet" to promote learning.⁴¹ To achieve this, confluent education utilized community participation and progressive teaching methods. Also to encourage innovation in teaching, some schools in Assiniboine-South,

³⁷ Winnipeg Tribune, 11 July 1973.

³⁸ Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (May 1975):15.

³⁹ Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

⁴¹ Idem, Education Manitoba 2 (December 1975):4.

St. Vital and Fort Garry school divisions in Winnipeg received grants for the sole purpose of improving the professionalism of their teachers. Methods ranged from the use of video tape cameras⁴² to the hiring of a psychologist to raise staff morale.

Demonstration grants were used to promote experimentation in the organization of the school calendar and the school day. As early as 1970 the Schreyer administration entertained the idea of permitting school divisions to independently set their own school hours and holidays provided that the standard 1100 hours of instruction per year was maintained.⁴³ Traditionally the school year in Manitoba began the first week in September and ended in late June of the following year. There were holidays at Christmas and Easter. The arrangement of the school timetable was for yearly courses of instruction, to be offered during a set number of hours or class periods per week. Each week or six-day cycle was essentially the same and the student remained with his classmates for most or all of the day. Demonstration grants encouraged innovation in school year organization. In 1972, Seven Oaks and Norwood school divisions in Winnipeg and Mystery Lake school district in Northern Manitoba experimented with a trimester system which divided the high school year into three, thirteen-week sections in which students were required to complete six different credits or courses per semester.⁴⁴ A year earlier, St. James-Assiniboia

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Idem, 1 (February 1975):5-7; Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 36.

43

Winnipeg Free Press, 26 September 1970.

44

Winnipeg Tribune, 9 May 1972; Winnipeg Free Press, 27 November 1972; Manitoba, Annual Report 1972-73, p. 55.

School Division in Winnipeg experimented with a semester system, which like the trimester system, also divided the curriculum into shorter units.⁴⁵ In this case, however, the school year was divided into two time blocs and courses lasted only one-half of the year. Beginning in 1973, the semester system generally replaced the previous full year system with the gradual adoption of the government's Revised High School Program.

Demonstration grants also encouraged innovation in school-day timetabling. Stevenson Junior High School in St. James-Assiniboia S.D. experimented with a program characterized by double (ninety minute) class periods, individualized curriculum, and daily option periods where students were free to select their own activities.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, in fifty of Winnipeg School Division's fifty-eight elementary schools, a "shortened school day" experiment was introduced in 1974. Instruction time was reduced by thirty minutes each day for teachers up to grade three to allow them extra time to prepare lessons. Participating schools had the option of dismissing classes early in the morning or afternoon; starting classes late in the morning or afternoon; or dismissing classes for one-half day per week.⁴⁷ The promotion of innovation in timetabling also led to the emergence of individual student timetables (in some cases produced by computer), and a

⁴⁵ Winnipeg Free Press, 16 March 1971.

⁴⁶ Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (February 1975):4.

⁴⁷ Winnipeg Tribune, 2 May 1975.

dramatic variety in period and cycle lengths from one school to
⁴⁸
 another.

Demonstration grants funded experiments related to curriculum expansion. George Fitton school in Brandon S.D. introduced an archaeology course for students aged eight to thirteen as a method of integrating Science, Mathematics, Language Arts and Social
⁴⁹
 Studies. Dakota Collegiate in St. Vital S.D. received funds enabling grade twelve girls to produce "multi-media resource kits" relating to women's studies.
⁵⁰
 Faraday school in Winnipeg S.D. "revamped" its spelling program with the purchase of 120 New Zealand spelling texts, which, unlike most Canadian spellers, focused upon language common to the student rather than upon phonetic groupings or progressively more difficult spelling levels.
⁵¹
 South Indian Lake school in Frontier S.D. received a grant with which to teach "life skills" such as woodworking and Cree syllabics.
⁵²
 St. James-Assiniboia S.D. took students to a vacated rural school to "learn" about the environment.
⁵³
 Winnipeg S.D. was funded to develop "social concerns" course material on "underdevelopment and poverty,"
⁵⁴
 "aesthetic understanding and expressions," and "parents as educators."

48

Winnipeg Free Press, 29 February 1972.

49

Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (February 1975):5.

50

Ibid.

51

Ibid.

52

Ibid.

53

Ibid.,p. 4.

54

Ibid.,p. 6.

As well as providing Demonstration grants to foster experimentation and research, beginning in 1974 the Department of Education provided "Outdoor Education" grants to allow schools and divisions to "experiment with various outdoor activities as part of the school curriculum."⁵⁵ During the school year 1974-75, grants totalling \$40,000 funded forty projects in twenty divisions. Beautiful Plains School Division located west of Winnipeg, for instance, received a grant for a "winter wonderland program" in Spruce Woods Provincial Park. Tiger Hills S.D. purchased camping equipment. Seven Oaks S.D. took eighty students on an excursion to Southern Manitoba.⁵⁶ Lord Selkirk S.D. received funds for snowshoeing,⁵⁷ orienteering and camping on the school grounds of Walter Whyte school. At the same time, Outdoor Education workshops on backpacking, crafts, etc. were held by the Department of Education in various locations across Manitoba. The accommodations, food and travel expenses of the participants were often paid for by the Department.⁵⁸

In addition to providing financial support to induce experimentation, the Department, mainly through the Planning and Research Branch, established projects in response to specific concerns. In 1975, Planning and Research in conjunction with Winnipeg S.D. introduced a two-year program entitled the "Secondary

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Idem, 1 (May 1975):15.

56

Winnipeg Free Press, 17 October 1974.

57

Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1 (May 1975):15.

58

Idem, 1 (April 1975):14.

Schools Alternative Program," to provide alternative schooling for
 59
 pupils who were unable to cope with the regular school program.

The project called for the matching of funds by the Department and
 the Division, up to a maximum of \$37,500 by each, to cover start-up
 costs. Twenty schools, involving 1500 students, joined the program.
 Many of these schools adopted the "school within a school" idea
 where a floor or wing of the school was set apart for the alternative
 program with its different organization and philosophy. "Robertson
 House" in Isaac Newton school was established to help students
 thirteen to seventeen years of age who were truancy or drop-out
 cases with emotional or domestic problems. The objectives of
 Robertson House were to improve the student's self image; to improve
 his social skills enabling him to get along with others; and to
 improve his reading, writing and arithmetic (the "three R s") so that
 60
 employment or re-entry into a regular school program was possible.

Similarly, King Edward school had an "Alexander Place" for elementary
 children who were non-attenders, glue sniffers, or who had emotional
 problems. Alexander Place provided a friendly, informal atmosphere,
 individual instruction, and emphasis upon social development through
 61
 activities such as camping, arts and crafts, and bowling. As an
 alternative to regular high schools, Argyle school offered its students
 unparalleled freedom. Students were given wide choices with courses
 and timetables, and the right to come and go as they pleased.

59

Idem, ERPA, "Inner-City Educational Programming and
 Financing," June 1977, p. 13.

60

Winnipeg School Division Number One, Area 2: Special Programs
 (Winnipeg: Winnipeg School Division Number One, n.d.), p. 125.

61

Ibid., pp. 3-4.

62
 Attendance was optional. The objectives of the school included finding employment for the students and the development of social conscientiousness through community involvement in such institutions as the Children's Hospital and the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. 63

During the period from 1969 to 1975 the NDP government placed high expectations upon its policy of experimentation. Demonstration grants were heralded as "small steps leading to a great leap forward" ; and teachers were urged to become the "vanguard" of reform in the 1970s. 64 To implement its policy the Schreyer administration relied heavily upon Orlikow and the Planning and Research Branch. Whereas in 1969 the Directorate of Research and Planning was of inconsequential importance, in 1975 Planning and Research dominated Manitoba's Department of Education.

62
 Idem, Our Schools 4 (June 1976):6.

63
 Idem, Area 1: Special Programs, p. 13.

64
 Lorimer as cited in Winnipeg Tribune, 29 September 1973;
 Miller as cited in Winnipeg Free Press, 17 October 1970.

CHAPTER VIII

EQUALIZATION

The Manitoba NDP like its predecessor, the CCF, has historically upheld the primacy of equality of educational opportunity as a prerequisite to the building of a better society in which social mobility and status are dependent upon individual ability and industry rather than upon family wealth. To the CCF and the NDP the "main-spring of democracy" was the provision of free education "universally available" at all scholastic levels.¹

The importance of equality of opportunity to the Manitoba NDP was reflected in its strong criticism of the previous Conservative governments before 1969. In 1964 Paulley charged that the paltriness of the government's student aid program of bursaries and loans deprived the young people of Manitoba of a "full and free education at all levels."² Later, he accused the government of "dragging its feet" in the provision of equality of opportunity.³ Saul Cherniak, MLA for St. Johns, reiterated the NDP belief that university education should be available to all regardless of "ability to pay."⁴ Doern claimed that the majority of students in university came from the wealthier areas of Winnipeg due to their financial and social advantages.⁵

¹ Lewis and Scott, Your Canada, p. 212; Manitoba, Debates, Schreyer, 16 March 1965, pp. 659-62 passim.

² Manitoba, Debates, 21 February 1964, p. 361.

³ Ibid., 22 March 1965, p. 841.

⁴ Ibid., 27 January 1967, p. 521.

⁵ Ibid., 26 January 1967, p. 484.

He also maintained that the Conservative student aid program rewarded those with high academic achievement rather than those with high financial need, thus penalizing those who needed the most assistance. ⁶

A high point in the debates was reached in 1969 when Minister of Education Craik stated that university fees were good because "to learn to pay your own way is a part of moral development" and that a university education was available to anyone who had the capacity and the desire to get it. ⁷ Labelling this as "a lot of hogwash," Miller accused the government of being "regressive" for setting the criteria for student aid so high that few low-income students qualified for bursaries. It would be fairer, he suggested, to remove all university fees and set entrance exams to make ability, and not wealth, the criterion. ⁸

The Conservatives were also criticized as being complacent towards the underprivileged. In 1968 Doern called for government initiative in the provision of pre-school nursery programs for underprivileged children. ⁹ The following year, Hanuschak demanded to know what the government was doing about the high drop-out rate whereby 20 percent of Manitoba's grade nine pupils failed to reach grade eleven, and why there was only one vocational junior high

⁶ Ibid., 14 May 1968, p. 1972; Ibid., 1 April 1969, pp. 920-22.

⁷ Ibid., 3 April 1969, pp. 968-69.

⁸ Ibid., 3 April 1969, p. 998.

⁹ Ibid., 13 May 1968, p. 1926.

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 school in the province. The plight of Native people was particularly disturbing to the NDP. Green argued that the current drop-out rate of 65 percent for Native children by grade twelve constituted a "dangerous situation" resulting in part from "stigmas," "vilification and slanderous propaganda" originating from such sources as cowboy movies.¹¹ According to Doern, history text books insulted Natives and he urged government rectification.¹²

Once in office, the NDP continued to stress the need for equality of educational opportunity. Ron McBryde, MLA for The Pas and later Minister of Northern Affairs, maintained that the school system was basically "white Anglo-Saxon Protestant" and unfair toward other cultures. He argued that schools should not be used as vehicles of assimilation because groups such as the Natives were not culturally deprived or disadvantaged but were merely culturally different. He urged that his government:

1. review text books for bias;
2. increase the number of minority group teachers in the schools, particularly at the elementary levels;
3. encourage minority and low-income parents to participate more in their schools;
4. reward experimentation by teachers; and
5. recognize Native languages at the high school and university levels.¹³

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Manitoba, Debates, 3 April 1969, p. 982.

11

Ibid., 7 April 1969, pp. 1032-36.

12

Ibid., 14 May 1968, p. 1973.

13

Ibid., 26 September 1969, pp. 1092-96.

In 1970, Gonick called upon his government colleagues to make a "massive effort" to assist the poor by providing such services as hot lunches, more vocational programs and greater health and dental care in schools.¹⁴

According to the NDP, although equality of educational opportunity had long been a provincial objective, it had never been realized. Despite the fact that government expenditures in education within the previous decade had increased yearly by approximately 10 percent,¹⁵ inequities still remained. The main causes of this inequality were geographic location, economic hardship and social differences. The concern for equality in the past ignored the significant variations among students and concentrated instead on equal treatment. According to the NDP, this approach was insensitive to the fact that children came from divergent social classes and that schooling affected them in different ways. Little heed was paid to the culture of groups which did not speak English as a first language; which did not endorse the value of competition; which did not automatically recognize the value of schooling; and which did not identify with the goals and vernacular of the middle class.

To correct the inequities of the past, the NDP government¹⁶ vowed to provide "genuine" equality of educational opportunity. It promised to acknowledge the inherent differences and diverse

¹⁴ Ibid., 24 March 1970, p. 255.

¹⁵ Manitoba, Guidelines For The Seventies, vol. 2, p. 86.

¹⁶ Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 7 June 1971, p. 1598.

needs of pupils and to provide greater and varying levels of support
 17
 and services to foster equal opportunity. According to Hanuschak:

The government is concerned for those too long neglected by our society. It has rejected the concept that only the children of the privileged and the academically oriented should be properly educated. It has now recognized that every child has different learning styles; we now recognize the necessity of allowing for and encouraging the individual differences of students, the kinds of differences that compromise [sic] a richness and strengths [sic] of any society.¹⁸

To this avowed purpose, during the period 1969-75 the Schreyer administration enacted a policy of equalization in four main areas. It increased the level of financial assistance to pupils with economic need and to school divisions seeking to expand their educational programs. It paid increased attention to the problems of Native students, and the needs of low-income and inner-city children. Upon taking office in 1969, the new government quickly provided an additional \$75,000 for student aid in the supplementary estimates
 19
 to the 1969-70 Conservative budget. The amount awarded in bursaries
 20
 that year subsequently totalled \$1,313,551.47. For the 1970-71 provincial estimates, the Schreyer administration increased the appropriation for bursary funds by more than one million dollars. Secondary bursaries for high school students increased 10.3 percent; university undergraduate bursaries increased 79.7 percent; post-graduate bursaries increased 50 percent; bursaries for community

17
 Manitoba, Reference Paper, p. 33.

18
 Manitoba, Debates, 7 April 1975, p. 998.

19
 Ibid., Miller, 11 September 1969, p. 667.

20
 Manitoba, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 88.

colleges increased 123.4 percent; and bursaries for "mature students" were introduced.²¹ This new category was for those who lacked a complete high school education, were twenty-one years of age or more, and were admitted to a post-secondary institution. Expansion of student aid continued annually thereafter as maximum individual bursary awards increased from \$500 to \$1000 in 1972 and to \$1400²² by 1975. In the fiscal year 1974-75 the NDP government appropriated ten million dollars for bursaries, approximately ten times²³ the amount last budgeted by the previous Conservative government.

In addition to providing student aid in the form of bursaries, the government also administered federal government student loans which by 1975 could amount to a maximum of \$1800 for a student who received a bursary of \$1400. If this aggregate sum was still inadequate, further aid could be obtained from the Manitoba Department of Health and Social Development which considered individual cases²⁴ upon application.

As well as increasing the amount of money available, beginning in 1971 the government also eased student aid requirements.²⁵ For

²¹ Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 15 April 1970, p. 954.

²² Ibid., Miller, 2 June 1972, p. 2604; Ibid., Hanuschak, 11 April 1975, p. 1220.

²³ Ibid., Hanuschak, 13 May 1974, p. 3461; Winnipeg Free Press, 27 April 1974.

²⁴ Winnipeg Tribune, 24 September 1973.

²⁵ Manitoba, Bulletin 8 (May 1970):7.

instance, family income ceilings were raised to assist students who were previously ineligible. The definition of "post-secondary" was expanded to include community colleges and nursing schools which required only a grade ten standing for admission. The 75 percent minimum course load requirement was lowered to 60 percent provided the applicant was a full-time student.²⁶

The Schreyer administration also endeavoured to widen the latitude of educational programs in Manitoba. Beginning in 1970, the government augmented the Foundation Program to induce school divisions to expand their vocational facilities and program options. Rural school divisions in particular, with their generally weaker tax base, were in need of assistance. Hence, "Vocational-Industrial" grants were raised from thirty dollars per qualifying pupil per year to \$32.50 per year.²⁷ In 1971 "Business Education" grants were introduced giving school divisions \$12.50 per qualifying pupil per year.²⁸ Grants for evening school programs for approved practical arts and vocational courses increased from three and five dollars respectively to eight dollars in both cases.²⁹ In 1974 "Establishment" grants for optional courses in Industrial Arts, Home Economics, and Business Education were increased from \$1500 to \$3000 for each approved program.³⁰

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For further detail see Winnipeg Free Press, 27 April 1974.

27

Manitoba, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 59.

28

Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 16.

29

Ibid., pp. 14-15.

30

Idem, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 13.

To further increase program accessibility to match student needs, in 1971 legislation was introduced making it mandatory for school boards to pay one another the residual costs for any pupil who enrolled in a program of study unavailable in his own division.³¹

To provide greater equity among school divisions such that the quality of a student's education would not depend upon the location of his home, the government expanded the Foundation Program's "Teachers' Salaries" grant and introduced two new grants beyond the Foundation Program. In 1970 the Teachers' Salaries grant was extended to include the salaries of psychologists and "special needs" teachers.³² This was of direct assistance to poorer school divisions who would otherwise experience difficulty in providing special programs. In 1973, a major system of "Equalization" grants was instituted based on the balanced assessment per pupil (BAPP) in each division and graduated in reverse proportion to that assessment. Thus, those divisions which collected less money from local property taxes would receive increased grants. These ranged from three dollars for those divisions with a BAPP of \$10,850 or more, to twenty-one dollars for those with a BAPP of \$4,600 or less.³³ The following year this grant system was doubled to range from six dollars to forty-two dollars.³⁴ In 1975, the grant scheme was markedly enhanced giving a minimum of

³¹ Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 11.

³² Idem, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 13.

³³ Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 23 March 1973, p. 957.

³⁴ Ibid., 8 March 1974, p. 1183.

forty dollars per pupil for those divisions with a BAPP of more than \$11,000, to a maximum of \$110 per pupil for those divisions with a BAPP of \$4,999 or less.³⁵ Thus, over three years the new Equalization grant for the poorest division rose from twenty-one dollars to \$110 per pupil.

As a special payment to school divisions and districts in Northern Manitoba, a "Northern Allowances" grant was introduced in 1975 and paid for by Order-in-Council. Calculated on the number of teachers employed in the fall of 1974, the grant paid school divisions and districts between the fifty-third and the fifty-sixth parallel four hundred dollars per teacher. Divisions and districts located between the fifty-sixth and the sixtieth parallel received nine hundred dollars per teacher.³⁶

To provide "redress" towards Natives, the government brought about a number of educational reforms.³⁷ During its first session in office the new government amended The Public Schools Act to give people of Indian ancestry living on reserves the right to vote and be elected to school boards.³⁸

Administratively, the Department of Education increased its efforts to produce instructional materials and programs pertinent to Native communities. By 1971 the Department's Curriculum Branch

³⁵ Ibid., 7 March 1975, p. 55.

³⁶ Manitoba, ERPA, Documents, May 1976; Winnipeg Free Press, 15 May 1975.

³⁷ Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 8 May 1974, p. 3247.

³⁸ Idem, Miller, 21 August 1969, p. 104.

completed a set of Social Studies supplements for all grade levels
 for the use of Native children.³⁹ A Cross-Cultural Committee
 established that year initiated "pilot projects" (test projects) in
 which a Native language was used in seven Northern Manitoba kinder-
 gartens; and Cree and Saulteau were taught at the secondary level.⁴⁰
 In the following year, the Cree language was piloted at two
 elementary levels.⁴¹ Similarly, in the Department's three rural
 "Special Schools," (Steadman, Hillridge and Falcon Beach), which were
 not part of a school division or district but were administered
 directly by the government, the curriculum and programs were revised.
 Beginning in 1971, these schools increasingly adopted the use of
 Native languages at the primary grades and the use of Native aides
 to teach Native crafts at all grades.⁴² Meanwhile, the government
 also advanced "Native education" with Demonstration grants. Indian
 cultural and language programs were funded in Northern school
 districts and in Frontier School Division.⁴³

Manitoba's Frontier S.D., which was created in 1965
 and administered by an "Official Trustee," underwent notable development
 in Native education during 1969 to 1975. This northernmost division
 of 170,000 square miles, thirty-four schools, and approximately

³⁹ Manitoba, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 16.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 33, 35.

⁴¹ Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 13.

⁴² Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 12; Idem, Annual Report 1972-73, p. 14.

⁴³ Idem, Education Manitoba 1 (February 1975):5-6.

5,400 students, moved towards self government in 1971.⁴⁴ The Division was divided into seven regions for the purpose of electing seven members to a Central Advisory Committee which also included government appointed members from the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood and the Manitoba Metis Federation. This Central Advisory Committee, in conjunction with newly elected community committees, shared in the governance of the Division with the Official Trustee although the Trustee retained ultimate responsibility.⁴⁵ As a result, there was an increase in Native languages instruction such as the teaching of Cree at Norway House. There was an increase in Native skills instruction such as the teaching of trapping at Moose Lake and bead work at Thicket Portage. Similarly, there was an increase in Native cultural instruction such as the teaching of Metis history and Native literature⁴⁶ at Moose Lake and at Frontier Collegiate in Cranberry Portage. At the same time, school libraries extended their services to foster community use, and hot lunch programs were initiated in many communities where large numbers of children were bused to school. Before 1969, there were no nursery classes and only four kindergartens in Frontier School Division. By 1974, there were twelve nurseries and twenty-two kindergartens in operation.⁴⁷ In terms of Native school employees, in 1970 there were thirteen Native teacher aides and few Native teachers employed

44
Winnipeg Free Press, 7 June 1975.

45
Manitoba, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 9; Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 13 May 1974, pp. 3453-54.

46
Manitoba, Annual Report 1973-74, pp. 75-76; Idem, Annual Report 1972-73, pp. 15-16.

47
Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 13 May 1974, p. 3454.

in the Division. By 1974 there were twenty-seven Native aides and
 48
 twenty-three Native teachers.

In 1974 the Schreyer administration established a Native
 Education Branch to "strengthen the position of Indians and Metis
 49
 in the Manitoba mosaic." The Branch was involved in curriculum
 development, field services, and special projects. The curriculum
 section of the Branch was responsible for monitoring Native language
 testing in Manitoba; producing "cross-cultural" Language Arts hand-
 books for schools; promoting Native language instruction in Northern
 schools; and providing cultural and language seminars to the RCMP
 and the Winnipeg Police Force. The field services section was
 responsible for providing liaison with local communities through Indian
 Band Councils, the Manitoba Metis Federation and other community
 groups; assisting Native communities in formulating educational goals;
 and establishing workshops for the advancement of Native education.
 The special projects section, for its part, was involved in such
 projects as the "Manitoba Indian Travelling College", which visited schools
 to present Native history and culture; and the "Traditional Individualized
 Education" project, which taught Native students such skills as hunting
 50
 and fishing as a means of transmitting cultural values.

The government also established compensatory programs for
 Native children and teaching career opportunities for Native adults.

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Cf., Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 32; Idem, Annual Report
1973-74, p. 76; Idem, Annual Report 1974-75, p. 41; Idem, Bulletin
8(June 70):1.

49

Idem, Annual Report 1974-75, p. 22.

50

Ibid.

In 1969, an experimental pre-school program entitled "Headstart" was introduced in Frontier S.D. to "ease" the entry of Native children into the school environment by providing informal activities conducted in a Native language. By the following year the program expanded to six other divisions, and by 1975⁵¹ included such services as a toy lending library and furnishing of nutritious foods. In 1974 a "School Milk" program with a budget of \$225,000 was instituted by Planning and Research to supplement the diets of children, from kindergarten to grade four, in thirty-three remote Northern communities.⁵² Sixteen ounces of milk or milk products (cheese, cream soup, etc.) per day was provided in combination with nutrition education. Local residents were trained as "nutrition advisors" by the government's New Careers Branch of the Department of Colleges and University Affairs and hired to feed and instruct the children.

To help counteract the high dropout rate among Native children allegedly due to "alienation" in "white man's" schools, the Schreyer administration created programs to train Natives as certified teachers.⁵³ The assumption was that Native teachers could best understand Native children and also serve as good examples. In 1971 an "Indian Metis Project for Active Careers Through Education" (IMPACTE) was created within Planning and Research. The project was of a work-study nature where the participants worked as student teachers while receiving university

51
Ibid., p. 23; Idem, Bulletin 8(June 1970):2.

52
Idem, Education Manitoba 1(October 1974):11; Winnipeg Free Press, 14 February 1974.

53
Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 2 June 1972, p. 2603.

training from itinerant professors from Brandon University. University fees were paid for by the project and the students received a monthly allowance as well. After three years, students received a teaching certificate equivalent to that normally granted after two years of study at a university. For the fiscal year 1975-76, IMPACTE had a budget of \$453,000.⁵⁴ Similar to IMPACTE, the government also established a "Project for the Education of Native Teachers " (PENT) in 1971. PENT provided teacher aides with on-the-job training and university summer-session education. Unlike IMPACTE, however, a two-year teacher's certificate was earned after five years rather than three.⁵⁵ In 1975, the government broadened its Native teaching career programs by creating the "Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Project " (BUNTEP) and the "Teacher Education for Rural Manitoba" (TERM) project to extend the services of IMPACTE in Manitoba's far North and Manitoba's rural communities. In the case of Northern Manitoba, for example, whereas IMPACTE only operated in Camperville and The Pas, BUNTEP was to include Nelson House, Cross Lake, Island Lake, Split Lake and Norway House. For the fiscal year 1975-76 the government allocated \$330,000 for BUNTEP and \$208,000 for TERM.⁵⁶ By 1975 these four projects in conjunction with a Winnipeg project, which was not exclusively for Natives, produced sixty-eight Native teachers. For

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Manitoba Teachers' Society, The Manitoba Teacher 53(February 1975):4; Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 15 April 1975, p. 1344.

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MTS, Manitoba Teacher 53(February 1975):4.

56

Ibid; Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 15 April 1975, p. 1344; Manitoba, Education Manitoba 1(March 1975):11.

1976 and 1977, the government anticipated the graduation of a total of
⁵⁷
 277 Native teachers.

In the interest of providing greater equality of opportunity for inner-city and low-income children, the NDP government took a number of measures. The government supplied Demonstration grants and other funds to school divisions to encourage pre-school education. School nurseries for children of the age of four, unlike kindergarten, received no salary grants within the Foundation Program. The major part of their costs was borne by school divisions. With the hope of demonstrating the merit of pre-school education for children living in depressed areas, the government funded such projects as the "King Edward School Early Childhood Area" and the "North Winnipeg Community
⁵⁸
 Action Day Nursery."

In 1975 the NDP government influenced Winnipeg S.D. into co-funding a "School Nutrition Program." Unofficially Planning and Research prepared a submission for the Division to present to the government; officially the Branch received the proposal; and un-
⁵⁹
 officially the Branch lobbied NDP legislators to accept the proposal. The result was a decision by the Winnipeg School Board to jointly fund the nutrition program which provided 4,500 needy students in twenty

⁵⁷
Winnipeg Free Press, 8 November 1975.

⁵⁸
 Manitoba, Annual Report 1971-72, p. 37.

⁵⁹
 Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," p. 7.

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schools with either a free hot breakfast, hot lunch or snack. The Board's five New Democratic trustees voted in favour of the program while the remaining four trustees voted against the proposal. The objectives of the program were to improve the attendance, scholastic achievement and eating habits of inadequately fed children. This program operated in thirteen inner-city schools and seven other schools with significant numbers of poor children. In its initial year of operation the program received \$200,000 from the Department of Education for food cost and \$120,000 from the Division for capital outlay. ⁶¹ Later in 1975, the Department considered expanding the program to include additional schools in Winnipeg S.D. and in other divisions but did not do so due to the controversial nature of the program. ⁶²

To increase the number of teachers indigenous to the inner-city, the government instituted career programs such as the two-year "Metis and Working Poor Project" created in 1970 to provide financial aid and counselling service to disadvantaged persons who would otherwise be unable to enter the teaching profession. ⁶³ This was followed

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The twenty schools were: Norquay, Pinkham, Shaughnessy Park, Strathcona, Clifton, Victoria Albert, Wellington, William Whyte, David Livingstone, Champlain, Dufferin, Fort Rouge, Greenway, John M. King, Montcalm, King Edward, Lord Roberts, Lord Selkirk, Machray and Margaret Scott. Winnipeg Free Press, 14 February 1975; Winnipeg Tribune, 15 March 1975.

61

Winnipeg Free Press, 5 April 1975.

62

Winnipeg Tribune, 15 December 1975.

63

Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 39.

by the "Winnipeg Centre Project" in 1972 which sought to recruit inner-city residents such as those of immigrant backgrounds for employment in inner-city schools.⁶⁴ Like its predecessor, the Winnipeg Centre Project operated under the auspices of Brandon university. For the 1975-76 fiscal year the project had a budget of \$420,000.⁶⁵ In 1974, the Department of Education in co-operation with the University of Manitoba and Winnipeg S.D. also introduced a "Faculty Assistants" program to provide teacher training oriented to the inner-city. Eleven practising inner-city teachers were paid to undergo fourteen months of additional university training applicable to their professional salary reclassification while assisting twenty-four student teachers with their practice teaching in inner-city classrooms.⁶⁶

To assist immigrants and migrant Native children in the inner-city, the government took two initiatives in 1975.⁶⁷ To ease the entry of immigrants into the school system, an "Immigrant Learning Centre" was established in Winnipeg S.D. and adult English language classes were offered in Brandon and River East school divisions. The Immigrant Learning Centre provided such services as translating, language classes, cultural activities, and curriculum consultations with interested schools. In Brandon and River East school divisions,

⁶⁴ Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," p. 21.

⁶⁵ Manitoba, Debates, Hanuschak, 15 April 1975, p. 1344.

⁶⁶ Manitoba, Bulletin 12(March 1974):1.

⁶⁷ Manitoba, ERPA, Documents, 1976.

Planning and Research funded the employment of language instructors and teacher aides. Portuguese, Filipino, and Chilean immigrants were the main beneficiaries of these activities. Concern for the welfare of Native children in the core area of Winnipeg prompted the NDP government to finance a research study of the problems caused by frequent moves from one school to another. The study was completed by 1976 and contained such information as pupil migrancy patterns, school turn-over rates, and the effects of frequent school changing upon scholastic development. Although political caution prevented this report from being made public,⁶⁸ the interest generated precipitated the hiring of a "liaison officer" by Winnipeg S.D. in an attempt to minimize the disruptive effect of migration upon the schooling of Native children.⁶⁹

During the period from 1969 to 1975 the Schreyer administration attempted to promote what it considered "genuine" equality of educational opportunity by providing increased financial support and various special compensatory services to those students in Manitoba's educational system who it believed had long been inadequately and unfairly served. Through its policy of equalization the NDP government endeavoured to offer greater educational opportunities to needy high school and post-secondary students, poor school divisions, Native students, and inner-city children.

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Personal knowledge.

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Winnipeg Tribune, 20 August 1975.

CHAPTER IX

MINORITY LANGUAGE RIGHTS

Although the topic of minority language rights had traditionally never received the attention given such issues as equality of opportunity, the NDP, both prior to and during the period from 1969 to 1975, was supportive of extending minority language rights within the public school system.

In 1963 Larry Desjardins, a Liberal MLA for St. Boniface who avowedly joined the NDP in 1969 because of its position regarding French language rights,¹ introduced a private member's resolution to allow the teaching of French in grade one rather than in grade four at the earliest.² The NDP supported this resolution and later resolutions by Desjardins in 1965 and 1966 which called for the introduction of French as a formal language of instruction.³ Similarly, in 1965 John Tanchak, the Liberal member for Emerson constituency, introduced a resolution to grant the Ukrainian language parity in status with French, German and Latin as a second language recognized for university entrance requirements.⁴ Both Schreyer and Paulley lent strong support to this resolution. They argued that Canada was a cultural "mosaic" and that minority languages must receive

¹ Manitoba, Debates, Desjardins, 26 June 1970, p. 3370.

² Idem, 15 March 1963, p. 305.

³ Idem, 26 June 1970, p. 3370.

⁴ Ibid., 9 April 1965, p. 142.

government support to forestall eventual demise.⁵

In 1967, one year after the report of the Federal Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, in response to the Manitoba government's Speech from the Throne which spoke of French language instruction only under "certain conditions," Paulley admonished the Conservatives that:

In the national interest it is as well for us to have French as a universal language with English, but if the objective is just within certain communities and certain areas to the exclusion of others, we will be doing an injustice to Canada.⁶

Later that year, the NDP gave full support to legislation which granted school divisions the right to use French as a formal language of instruction up to 50 percent of the school day.⁷

In 1968, Minister of Education Craik informed a group of Ukrainian parents seeking to have their language taught as early as grade one that they were guilty of "ethnic bias."⁸ In response, Hanuschak accused the Conservatives of complacency regarding the instruction of Ukrainian. He blamed the lack of student interest in the language on the fact that the government introduced Ukrainian in

⁵ Ibid., Schreyer, 13 April 1965, pp. 1546-47; Ibid., Paulley, 27 April 1965, p. 1936.

⁶ Ibid., 8 December 1967, p. 61.

⁷ Ibid., Johnson, 20 March 1967, p. 1821.

⁸ Tom Peterson, "Manitoba," in Canadian Annual Review for 1968, ed. John Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 169.

1962 on a non-credit basis giving it diminished importance. To rectify this, Hanuschak demanded that the government demonstrate support "not only in lip service but in deed" by granting Ukrainian equal status with German and French. Moreover, he stated the principle that:

If our government truly admits to the fact that our province is an ethnic mosaic, it should then give leadership to the institution of teaching all languages for which there is a demand.⁹

In 1969, during Manitoba's provincial election, Premier Weir adopted a hard line against the issue of bilingualism. Schreyer, unlike both his Liberal and Conservative opponents, endorsed the federal Official Languages Bill which called for two official languages in Canada.¹⁰

Four months after winning the provincial election, Premier Schreyer informed the Franco-Manitoban Society of the new government's intention to expand the use of French as a language of instruction, a policy begun under the Roblin administration but unpopular with the Weir government.¹¹ In the 1970 Throne Speech the NDP government stated its resolve to increase "the recognition of the varied linguistic and cultural composition of this province."¹² According to Miller, the NDP government did not favour a "melting pot philosophy":

⁹ Manitoba, Debates, 3 April 1969, p. 981.

¹⁰ Peterson, "Manitoba" in Canadian Annual Review For 1969, p. 129.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 132.

¹² Manitoba, Debates, 12 March 1970, p. 5.

As the Premier and as many of my colleagues have stated time and time again, the basic cultural character of the Province of Manitoba cannot and should not be reduced to a dull uniformity.¹³

In accordance with its beliefs, the NDP during the period 1969-75 adopted a policy of increasing minority language rights within the public school system. In terms of statutory reform, the NDP introduced two major bills which amended The Public Schools Act to enhance language rights. In 1970 the government passed Bill 113 which restored the French language to an equal status with English, as an official language of instruction in Manitoba schools as it had been prior to 1916. Section 258(1) of The Public Schools Act was replaced by the following:

258(1) Subject as otherwise provided in this section, English and French being the two languages to which reference is made in the British North America Act, 1867, are the languages of instruction in public schools.¹⁴

Bill 113 established the creation of both French and English Language Advisory Committees to advise the Minister on matters pertaining to the use of French or English as a language of instruction and allowed either of the two to be used as the language of administration in schools. At the same time, this momentous bill also allowed other languages,¹⁵ such as Cree or Ukrainian, to be taught as early as kindergarten. One declared purpose of Bill 113 was to restore for Franco-Manitobans

13

Ibid., 24 June 1970, p. 3164.

14

Bill 113 as cited in Manitoba, Bulletin 9 (October 1970):8-9.

15

Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 24 June 1970, p. 3164.

"the rights to an education in their mother tongue with a view to preserving their culture and heritage."¹⁶ It was also intended to permit the extension of minority languages, which in the case of Native people would, it was hoped, assist in developing their sense of self-worth.¹⁷

In 1974 the government introduced Bill 36 which further amended Section 258 of The Public Schools Act by making languages other than French or English acceptable as languages of instruction for "transitional" purposes in the primary grades.¹⁸ This change was intended for the benefit of immigrant and Native children. Government speakers claimed that children who could not speak English would adjust better if they entered a classroom which was audibly familiar. They would then be better able to begin the difficult process of learning a new language, be it French or English. The new law, in combination with the government's efforts with its community schools, experimentation and equalization policies, encouraged the employment of Native and "ethnic teacher aides" in school divisions with sizeable concentrations of immigrant and Native children.

Administratively, to extend the use of minority languages the new government promptly created a Second Languages Curriculum Council within the Department of Education. The task of this Council

16

Manitoba, Department of Education, Bureau De L'Education Française, "Towards a Network of Ecoles Francaises in Manitoba," 1975, p. 3.

17

Manitoba, Debates, McBryde, 25 June 1970, p. 3321.

18

Ibid., Hanuschak, 21 March 1974, p. 1630.

was to appraise the "purpose and place" of second language teaching
 in Manitoba.¹⁹ Although this body occupied itself primarily with the
 collection of data, it did serve to illustrate the interest and
 importance given to minority languages by the Schreyer government.

The Department of Education developed course outlines for
 all grades for existing second languages and introduced numerous new
 languages to the school curriculum. In 1971, for instance, the
 teaching of German and Ukrainian was extended to the elementary level
 on a pilot basis and by 1972 approved language programs for kinder-
 garten to grade twelve for both of these languages were completed.²⁰
 In the same year, Native languages such as Cree and Saulteaux were
 introduced at various grade levels in a number of school divisions.²¹
 In 1972 a Spanish program was established in Winnipeg S.D. at the
 junior high school level.²² Two years later, an Italian course was also
 offered by the Winnipeg S.D. at the junior high level and an
 Icelandic language program for grades one to seven was instituted
 in Evergreen S.D. because of its large Icelandic population.²³
 This was followed in 1975 by the introduction of Hebrew at the junior
 high school level in both Winnipeg and Seven Oaks school divisions.²⁴

¹⁹ Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 28.

²⁰ Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, p. 34; Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, pp. 12-13.

²¹ Idem, Annual Report 1970-71, pp. 33, 35.

²² Idem, Annual Report 1971-72, pp. 12-13; personal knowledge.

²³ Idem, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 6; personal knowledge.

²⁴ Idem, Annual Report 1974-75, p. 3; personal knowledge.

By 1975 ten new languages were being taught in various school divisions across Manitoba in addition to French, German, Ukrainian and Latin which were offered prior to 1969.²⁵ The enrolment in these ten new languages totalled 2,838 in March 1975.²⁶

The government also encouraged ethnic groups and language teachers to participate in the expansion and revision of language courses. In 1971, for example, the Department of Education funded the Canadian Ukrainian Association of Manitoba to produce a supplementary Ukrainian language program for grades seven to twelve.²⁷ Four years later, the Association received a further \$15,400 with which to develop more curriculum materials.²⁸ Beginning in 1975, the Department of Cultural Affairs provided grants for an "Ancestral Languages" program. In its first year, \$29,000 was given to cultural organizations and church groups to teach ancestral languages other than English in communities without enough students to warrant public school classes. Generally, school buildings were used after school hours. The program involved 3,311 students attending 181 classes in eleven languages -- French, Ukrainian, Polish, German, Italian, Yiddish, Mennonite German, Icelandic, Korean, Hungarian and Greek. Qualifying organizations received

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Chipewyan, Cree, Cree-Odjibwe, Saulteaux, Odjibwe, Sioux, Hebrew, Icelandic, Italian, and Spanish. Ibid., p. 53.

26

Cf., Ibid.; Manitoba, Department of Education, Curriculum Branch, Documents, 1975.

27

Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 11 June 1971, p. 1741.

28

Winnipeg Free Press, 5 April 1975.

the lesser of ten dollars per student up to three hundred dollars per classroom, or one-third of the classroom program cost.²⁹ To improve the skills of German and Ukrainian language teachers, the government financed annual trips to Europe for groups of language teachers. Beginning in 1973, approximately twenty German teachers were sent to Gummersbach, Germany for a two-week course and fifteen Ukrainian teachers were sent to Kiev in the USSR for a four-week language seminar.³⁰

In recognition of languages other than French and English, in 1973, the Department of Education began granting credit equivalency for any language not available in the high school program.³¹ Credit was given at the grade ten, eleven, and twelve levels for special languages in which students could demonstrate competence. In all languages, other than Native languages, competence included the ability to read, write, and speak the language to a sufficient degree of accuracy. In the case of Native languages, for the granting of credit at the grade twelve level, the Department required that the examiner be an Indian chief; a representative of a university, cultural or religious institution; a designate of the Manitoba Metis Federation or Manitoba Indian Brotherhood; or simply a "competent person."³²

²⁹ Winnipeg Tribune, 7 January 1976.

³⁰ Cf., Manitoba, Annual Report 1972-73, p. 27; Idem, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 6; Idem, Annual Report 1974-75, pp. 2-3.

³¹ Idem, Bulletin 12 (September 1973):1.

³² Idem, Bulletin 12 (April 1974):4-5.

In regard to minority languages generally, the NDP government took the most initiative in the promotion of French. In 1971 a French language teachers' college was opened in St. Boniface with a capacity of approximately two hundred students. An objective of the government since 1969, the college was jointly funded with the federal government and it replaced the French teacher's college which operated until 1916 when the Manitoba government prohibited the use of French as a language of instruction in public schools.³³ A new "Section Française" was also created within the Department's Curriculum Branch in 1971. It was assigned the responsibility of extending the existing French as a second language program to the elementary level, and developing a new "Français" as a first language program for children whose mother tongue was French. To achieve this latter task, the Section initiated the establishment of teacher committees to produce French programs for Mathematics, Science and other subjects and the provision of in-service training for French teachers.³⁴ Yet, there was little movement on the part of school divisions to establish French schools in Manitoba because, as one assistant deputy minister stated, "Bill 113 was itself an initiative of the Manitoba government and not the outcome of obvious popular pressuring."³⁵ It was not until 1972

33

Manitoba, Debates, Miller, 11 June 1971, p. 1737.

34

Manitoba, Annual Report 1970-71, pp. 34, 39.

35

Raymond Hebert, "The Evolution of French Education in Manitoba," Speech delivered in Edmonton, Alberta, 8 September 1977, p. 4. (Mimeographed.)

that a number of French school trustees and superintendents, alarmed at the apathy of the French community, published a report entitled the "Frechette Report" which indicated that 40 percent of Manitoba's francophone pupils in 1969 were not enrolled in a single French course.³⁶ Representation was then made to the Department of Education and Premier Schreyer to hasten the development of French education. As a result, Assistant Deputy Minister Orlikow invited Olivier Tremblay, from Quebec's Education Ministry, to join the Planning and Research Branch for the purpose of conducting a one-year study on the application of Bill 113. In 1973 Tremblay made his report recommending that a "co-ordinator" be immediately appointed with far reaching authority to implement all aspects of the legislation. To achieve this, the co-ordinator was to organize a "Planning Committee" with representation from Franco-Manitoban cultural associations and French school divisions and to assume administrative responsibility for the federal grants given Manitoba for the promotion of Canada's second official language.³⁷

36

Ibid., p. 8.

37

In 1969 the federal government agreed to provide the provinces of Canada financial assistance for supplementary costs incurred in providing official minority language education and second language instruction. For the period from January 1970 to March 1975, Manitoba received \$5,279,683 from the federal government of which \$3,410,684 was then given directly to school divisions in Manitoba. Manitoba, BEF, "Towards a Network of Ecoles Françaises in Manitoba," n.d., app. A and C; Olivier Tremblay, "French Education in Manitoba 1972-73 Synthesis Report," Winnipeg, 27 June 1973, pp. 16-17. (Mimeographed.)

In April 1974, in response to the "Rapport Tremblay" the Bureau De L'Education Française (BEF) was created within the Department of Education and Tremblay was appointed co-ordinator of the new branch. The creation of BEF was a fulfilment of the government's promise to establish a "permanent administrative structure within the Department for the promotion, implementation and administration of each and every provision of the act [sic] which authorizes French as a language of instruction in Manitoba."³⁸ Tremblay remained co-ordinator for two years after which the position was designated that of an assistant deputy minister to reflect the importance of the Branch.

By 1975 BEF had grown considerably from a small branch agency of three people with a total budget of about \$230,000 to a new branch of sixteen people with a budget of \$500,000 excluding federal grants.³⁹ It continued the work of its predecessor, the Section Française, and it produced a document entitled "Towards a Network of Ecoles Françaises in Manitoba" outlining its long-term goals for the period 1974-1979. This document suggested the formation of three types of schools: all-English schools, "immersion" schools, and all-French schools. In the all-English schools instruction would be in English, except for the teaching of second languages, and the language of administration would be English. In immersion schools the program

38

Raymond Hebert, "The Evolution of French Education in Manitoba," p. 11.

39

Winnipeg Free Press, 6 March 1976.

would be 75 percent in French and 25 percent in English; the language of administration would be English but the classroom language of communication would be French. In all-French schools, all subjects would be taught in French including English which would be taught as a mandatory second language after grade three. In these schools the language of communication and administration would be French and the total school staff would be fully French speaking. The school climate, through curricular and extra-curricular activities, would be French.⁴⁰ The ultimate goal of BEF was the establishment of a network of French-language schools and French immersion schools or programs throughout the province.

To encourage school divisions to expand their French language programs and to establish French and immersion schools, the government introduced special grants in 1975.⁴¹ Since the advent of Bill 113 in 1970, divisions wishing to offer dual programs of instruction were caught in financial straits. Additional personnel and material costs had to be borne by local school boards with no aid from the province. To avoid this dilemma, provincial and federal guidelines for the use of federal funds, which were intended to supplement not supplant instruction costs such as teacher salaries, were never fully respected. Local boards had the choice of ignoring the guidelines or risking recriminations from unilingual taxpayers because of the imposition of

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Manitoba, BEF, "Towards a Network of Ecoles Françaises in Manitoba," pp. 4,5,9.

41

Ibid., p. 19.

additional taxes. In an attempt to remedy this situation, the government provided grants to help cover both initial and continuing costs. In 1975 BEF distributed "French Development" grants to cover initial program costs. These grants were based upon a "full-time equivalency" formula where an "FTE" represented a student following 75 percent of his instruction in French. The allocation for the fiscal year 1975-76 was \$484,613 under which \$357 per FTE was given at the elementary level and \$435 per FTE was given at the secondary level.⁴² In 1976, the government provided "Programme Maintenance" grants of \$190 per FTE to cover continuing costs, such as additional teacher salaries.⁴³

During the NDP government's first five and one-half years in office it adopted an expansionary languages policy which increased the number of languages in school curriculums and which increased the language rights of certain minority groups in Manitoba. The main beneficiaries of this policy were the province's Native and French populations. Native languages received recognition which previously did not exist and French was restored to a status deprived it in 1916. Throughout the period from 1969 to 1975 the New Democratic government insisted that Manitoba was a cultural "mosaic" which should not be reduced to a "dull uniformity."

42

Manitoba, Information Services Branch, News Service, 9 January 1976.

43

Idem, Department of Education, BEF, Memorandum, 5 May 1976.

CHAPTER X

OPPOSITION REACTIONS

The reactions of Manitoba's opposition parties to the NDP government's educational policies during the period from 1969 to 1975, as chronicled in the legislative debates, are best summarized by an observation once made by Hanuschak when presenting the Department of Education's estimates to the House. In 1974 Hanuschak mused that few of his Department's programs were greeted with "salvos of joy" and that opposition generally ranged from "mild disagreement to rigorous disapproval."¹

The opposition's reactions to the education policies of the NDP government can be divided into two convenient time blocs--² 1969 to 1973 and 1974 to 1975. During the new government's first term in office, 1969-73, the opposition focused its attention mainly on the issue of educational finances and school taxes. The Throne Speech, Budget Speech, and Education Estimates debates all reflected a narrow preoccupation on the part of the opposition with the question of rising education costs. The main criticism, in this regard, was that the Foundation Program, as a mechanism for the provision of

¹ Manitoba, Debates, 8 May 1974, p. 3245.

² In the 1969 provincial election twenty-eight New Democrats, twenty-two Progressive Conservatives, five Liberals, one Social Credit, and one Independent were elected to Manitoba's legislature. In the 1973 provincial election thirty-one New Democrats, twenty-one Progressive Conservatives, and five Liberals were elected to the legislature.

fiscal equity to school divisions, was not being adequately maintained by the government. Liberals and Conservatives also introduced several resolutions urging the Schreyer administration to provide greater "tax relief" by increasing its portion of the Foundation Program to 100 percent, and by exempting farmers and pensioners from school taxes.³ So restricted was the debate on education to the topic of school taxation, that at one point Turnbull chided the opposition for its fixation on the one issue and its disinterest in debating the broader questions of the effectiveness of Manitoba's educational system and its future direction.⁴ His attempt to engage the opposition in a discussion of educational philosophy was met with disparaging remarks.⁵

When the opposition did divert its attention from education costs, limited debate took place regarding various aspects of the government's educational policies. In general, during the government's first term in office the opposition grudgingly accepted a few of the changes enacted by the NDP, but commonly indicated the disfavourable sentiments which led to Hanuschak's observation in 1974. On rare occasions, however, members of the opposition, such as the leader of the Conservative party Sidney Spivak who was known for his "progressive" views, stood in stark contrast to their colleagues by criticizing the

³ See for example, Manitoba, Debates, 10 October 1969, p. 1688; Ibid., 24 March 1972, p. 410; Ibid., 15 March 1973, p. 687.

⁴ Ibid., Turnbull, 20 April 1970, p. 1087.

⁵ Ibid., George Henderson Conservative MLA for Pembina, 20 April 1970, p. 1088.

government for not going far enough.

The NDP's policy of decentralization was, for the most part, ignored by the two major opposition parties although isolated reactions did take place. Liberal Gordon Johnston, MLA for Portage la Prairie, accused the government in 1971 of centralizing rather than decentralizing educational authority.⁶ Meanwhile, Conservative Gabe Girard, representing Emerson, lauded the government's Bill 13 which granted an eighteen dollar unspecified grant to assist in decentralizing the spending allocation decisions of school divisions.⁷ Jake Froese, Social Credit member for Rhineland, persistently accused the government during its first term in office of being centralist and against local control. Representing a largely Mennonite constituency containing multi-district school divisions with a high proportion of small schools, Froese argued that it was discriminatory for non-unitary school divisions to be excluded from the benefits available under the Foundation Program such as the new eighteen dollar Block grant. A fervent advocate of local self-government, Froese viewed New Democrats as "the greatest centralizers ever."⁸

During 1969-73 the government's policy of democratization was met with mixed reactions in the legislature. The major education critics for the Conservative party, Craik and Girard, both gave cautious

⁶ Ibid., 13 April 1971, p. 49.

⁷ Ibid., 5 May 1971, p. 631.

⁸ Manitoba, Debates, 8 June 1971, p. 1650.

approval to the Core Committee's 1970 Interim Report which called for major changes in Manitoba's educational philosophy and organization at the secondary level.⁹ Moreover, Girard, a school division superintendent by occupation, accused the government in 1973 of inadequate curriculum revision, and urged granting more power to teachers to induce innovation.¹⁰ The promotion of open area classrooms, on the other hand, received little support among most Conservative members who viewed them as "frills" in "extravagant" school buildings contributing to excessive education costs.¹¹ Also, some opposition MLAs criticized the general direction they felt the government was leading education. Henderson stated that too much was being spent on an educational system which, because of its philosophy, turned out "educated fools."¹² Party colleague Henry Einarson, MLA for Rock Lake, meanwhile deplored lack of discipline in classrooms.¹³

Liberal, Social Credit and Independent members voiced parallel views regarding open area classrooms and the extension of greater decision-making power to teachers and pupils. Liberals criticized the concept of open area on the basis of high costs.¹⁴ Froese meanwhile claimed that this type of classroom structure permitted teachers to do little work--to "slough it off."¹⁵ The extension of

⁹ Ibid., Craik, 15 April 1970, p. 962; Ibid., Girard, 7 June 1971, p. 1605.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19 May 1973, p. 3063.

¹¹ Ibid., Morris McGregor MLA for Virden, 16 April 1971, p. 165.

¹² Ibid., 7 May 1970, p. 1705.

¹³ Ibid., 20 May 1971, p. 1121.

¹⁴ Ibid., Johnston, 20 April 1970, p. 1078.

¹⁵ Ibid., 5 June 1972, p. 2630.

decision-making rights, however, was supported by the Liberals and by Gordon Beard, Independent and former Conservative member for Churchill.¹⁶ Beard felt that teachers, particularly those working with Native children in the North, needed the freedom to shape the curriculum to suit the needs of their students.

The policy of encouraging greater community participation in schools received modest support from the opposition. Although Conservative members representing rural constituencies were concerned about the closing of schools in small communities and the subsequent busing of students, their inclination was to blame the government for its burdensome school taxes on farm land.¹⁷ They did not advocate the improvement of small schools through the utilization of community resources to expand curricular options to enhance the quality of education. Yet, in the traditional reply to the Throne Speech by the leader of the official opposition, Spivak, MLA for River Heights, accepted the government's intentions in 1973 to develop a community schools policy and criticized only the lack of detail provided on such steps as the establishment of school community committees.¹⁸ The Liberal party, for its part, voiced support for the extension of school

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Manitoba, Debates, Steve Patrick MLA for Assiniboia, 8 June 1971, p. 1641; Ibid., Beard, 10 June 1971, p. 1703.

¹⁷

Ibid., Harry Enns member for Lakeside, 27 April 1972, p. 1451; Ibid., Wally McKenzie MLA for Roblin, 5 June 1972, p. 2656.

¹⁸

Ibid., 26 February 1973, p. 45.

facilities to the community after hours but reproached the NDP administration for promising only to explore the feasibility of a school dental care program, a service which one of its members described as "overdue."¹⁹

During the NDP government's first term in office, its policy of experimentation received little examination from the Liberal, Social Credit and Independent members of the legislature but proved to be unpopular with the official opposition. Conservative aversion to potentially costly experimentation rested on the belief that the government should concern itself more with reducing school costs.²⁰ According to Harry Graham, Conservative member for Birtle-Russell, given the "large sums of money that we are spending, I don't think that we can be too frivolous in our innovations and experimentation."²¹ Also, the Planning and Research Branch, as the author of most "experiments," became an anathema to the Conservative party. It was scornfully described as a "small cell-like group" created to "give some people jobs," and as having a staff so poorly qualified in the field of education that it undermined the morale of the regular civil servants in the Department of Education.²²

The NDP government's policy of equalization drew the most criticism, with the issue of student aid attracting particular invective.

¹⁹ Ibid., Patrick, 8 June 1971, p. 1641; Idem, 1 March 1973, p. 156.

²⁰ Ibid., Girard, 5 June 1972, p. 2641.

²¹ Ibid., 26 April 1971, p. 327.

²² Ibid., Enns, 17 May 1973, p. 2983; Ibid., Warner Jorgenson MLA for Morris, 18 May 1973, p. 3062; Ibid., Girard, 18 May 1973, p. 3066.

The Conservatives denounced the government's use of bursaries to increase the accessibility of university to low-income students. To the official opposition, bursaries granted on an incomes criterion served as a blatant example of the government's "socialistic" philosophy. It argued that the costs of a university education should be paid by those who benefit most from it; and that if direct government support ended at grade twelve, university students would place more value on their education.²³ According to the Conservatives, the government was spending too much money on university education and too many students felt that "education is a right rather than a privilege." Under these circumstances, they reasoned, a tuition or "deterrent fee" was justifiable.²⁴ "Hand-outs" in the form of bursaries would foster wrong attitudes and the NDP government was urged to provide students with loans rather than bursaries.²⁵ These sentiments were not exclusive to the Conservative party. Froese favoured loans rather than bursaries because they would reduce the taxpayers' burden.²⁶ Likewise, Liberal Gordon Johnston declared that he was disturbed that bursary assistance increased from \$1.3 million in 1970 to \$5.1 million in 1972 and accused the government of promoting a "give-away society."²⁷

The issue of urban-rural disparities affecting equality of

²³ Ibid., Graham, 10 June 1970, p. 2751; Idem, 8 June 1971, p. 1638.

²⁴ Ibid., James Ferguson MLA for Gladstone, 21 May 1971, p. 1151.

²⁵ Ibid., Henderson, 2 June 1972, p. 2597; Ibid., Girard, 1 June 1972, p. 2557.

²⁶ Manitoba, Debates, 2 June 1972, p. 2600.

²⁷ Ibid., 11 April 1972, p. 862.

educational opportunities was also a topic of remonstrance. The opposition was united in accusing the government of failing to provide adequate equality of opportunity. Patrick maintained that rural students had fewer opportunities to attend university than did urban students.²⁸ Froese blamed the government's school grants system which he claimed precipitated onerous special levies on rural landowners.²⁹ Similarly, Spivak argued that a new comprehensive education taxation system was needed to replace the NDP's property tax rebate "experiments" to provide rural communities with greater equality of opportunity.³⁰

Unlike the reception given other educational policies, the NDP's efforts to extend minority language rights were favourably received and criticism was limited to the claim that the government was not going far enough. Bill 113, granting the French language parity with the English language in schools, was passed unanimously in the legislature in 1970.³¹ Former Minister of Education Craik stated that this legislation was a logical continuation of the previous Conservative administration's policies and found fault with the bill only for its failure to provide detail regarding implementation funding and its prescriptive reference to the establishment of French classes

²⁸ Ibid., 1 June 1972, p. 2566.

²⁹ Ibid., 18 May 1973, p. 3013.

³⁰ Ibid., 26 February 1973, p. 49.

³¹ Manitoba, Debates, 26 June 1970, p. 3401.

rather than the establishment of entire French schools.³² Conservative colleague McKenzie urged the government to go beyond the establishment of only French and English Advisory Boards as stipulated in Bill 113 and to create Roumanian languages and Native languages advisory boards as well.³³ A year later, the government was admonished by the official opposition for not expediting the implementation of French language instruction and for not hiring a person to coordinate the advancement of the various second languages.³⁴ As well, the government was urged to encourage French instruction in non-French communities and to offer conversational French to anglophones beginning in kindergarten.³⁵

During the period 1974-75 the attention of the opposition shifted from a steadfast attack on the issue of educational finances and rising school taxes to a vehement denunciation of the NDP government's educational policies on the ground that they were too "permissive." Three reasons can be offered for this shift. First, the opposition's criticism regarding the government's alleged inaction in relieving the education tax burden from local taxpayers was undermined by the introduction of Foundation Program changes and a number of tax credit plans. The provincial treasury's share of the Foundation

32

Ibid., 25 June 1970, p. 3318.

33

Ibid., 25 June 1970, p. 3321.

34

Ibid., Girard, 7 June 1971, p. 1605.

35

Ibid., Craik, 8 June 1971, p. 1647.

Program was increased from 70 percent to 75 percent in 1971, and from 75 percent to 80 percent in 1973 leaving thereafter only 20 percent to be raised by the Program's general tax levy.³⁶ More important, in 1972 the NDP government introduced an "Education Property Tax Credit Plan" for the benefit of both homeowners and renters. In accordance with the government's philosophy of "ability to pay" taxation, the new credit plan related school property taxes to income levels. For those with a gross income of \$13,000 or more, the credit plan provided the minimum amount of fifty dollars. For those with smaller incomes, the plan provided progressively larger rebates such that those with a gross yearly income of \$3,500 or less, received the maximum of \$140.³⁷ In 1973, this credit plan was replaced by a more comprehensive "Manitoba Property Tax Credit Plan" which was designed to assist not only in the payment of school taxes but municipal taxes as well in the case of low-income citizens. Like its predecessor, this credit plan was administered through the annual federal income tax structure. For its first year of operation the rebate rates were raised from the previous fifty dollars minimum to one hundred dollars and the \$140 maximum to two hundred dollars.³⁸ In 1975, the Plan's rebates were raised further from a minimum of one hundred dollars to \$175 and from a maximum of two hundred dollars to three hundred dollars.³⁹ Second,

36

Ibid., Cherniack, 13 May 1971, p. 917; Ibid., Hanuschak, 23 March 1973, p. 957.

37

Ibid., Cherniack, 6 April 1972, pp. 700-701.

38

Ibid., Schreyer, 27 March 1973, p. 1108.

39

Idem, 24 April 1975, p. 1678.

the education policies initiated during the NDP's first term in office were now reaching fruition and their effects were becoming readily apparent. And lastly, public reaction to changes in the schools was increasing such that education was becoming a rising political issue. This is not to suggest that the opposition became satisfied with the government's efforts in dealing with rising education costs. It continued to attack the supposed abandonment of the Foundation Program and accused the NDP government of "backsliding and shortchanging our children in education."⁴⁰ Furthermore, both Liberals and Conservatives criticized the government's tax credit plans as an inadequate and confusing "band-aid approach",⁴¹ which served as a vote buying scheme reminiscent of "Machiavellian politics."⁴²

Nonetheless, the Department of Education's individual programs came under closer opposition scrutiny in 1974 and 1975 and the topic of education costs declined in relative prominence. The government's policy of decentralization, largely ignored during the NDP's first term in office, was now assailed on three fronts. The new high school credit system, which featured school and student initiated courses, was criticized as a government attempt to decentralize responsibility rather than authority. Conservative education critic, Ed McGill

⁴⁰ Manitoba, Debates, Enns, 16 April 1974, p. 2475.

⁴¹ Ibid., J. Paul Marion Liberal member for St. Boniface, 22 April 1974, p. 2657.

⁴² Ibid., Craik, 9 May 1974, p. 3335.

representing Brandon West, pointed out that school divisions were not consulted during the planning of the new system and were not given any choice as to whether or not to adopt it. According to McGill:

I see it as no decentralization of decision-making. I see it certainly as a watering of the responsibility of a decision that's been made within the department....⁴³

The gist of the Conservative position was that while the credit system made the provision of broad curricular offerings the responsibility of the school, the initial decision to shift this responsibility to school divisions was made solely by the government. Thus, true decision-making authority remained in the hands of the Department of Education, as always; but now the responsibility of meeting the curricular demands of students fell upon the school divisions. The government's policy of decentralization led Liberal Lloyd Axworthy, MLA for Fort Rouge, to assert that the Department was "drifting" without a course, "bobbing" along with the trends.⁴⁴ Evidence of lack of leadership was meanwhile offered by the Conservatives. They accused the government of failing to replace the Departmental exams, abolished in 1970, with an alternative mechanism for monitoring the quality of education across the province and noted that both the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Teachers' Society had appealed to the government for some form of evaluation to

43

Ibid., 9 May 1974, p. 3371.

44

Ibid., 9 May 1974, p. 3292.

45
prevent a disparity in school division standards.

During the period 1974-75, the NDP government's policy of democratization attracted the most scorn from the official opposition. The government's Core Report which provided the basic philosophy for the new high school credit program, was disdainfully labelled as "outdated," "disgusting" and "drive1."⁴⁶ The Conservatives accused the government of "abdicating its responsibility" to maintain sound education by imprudently providing increased decision-making powers to students.⁴⁷ The credit system, they alleged, assumed too much maturity on the part of students to choose courses which would be to their lasting benefit and placed students in a position where they could easily jeopardize their futures due to their inability to ascertain their long-term interests. Accordingly, Conservatives expressed "deep reservations about this whole direction in which the high school system is going in Manitoba."⁴⁸ In the opinion of McGill, there was a "real danger" that high schools would soon become "teenage drop-in centres"; places for student "entertainment"; "a sort of fun place," characterized by "permissiveness" and the "trivializing" of curriculum.⁴⁹ The existing and proposed "looseness" of the grading system was also questioned. Craik argued that since all students would inevitably

45

Ibid., McGill, 7 April 1975, p. 1003.

46

Ibid., Henderson, 9 May 1974, p. 3336; Ibid., J. Frank Johnston
MLA for Sturgeon Creek, 13 May 1974, p. 3427.

47

Manitoba, Debates, McGill, 8 May 1974, pp. 3251-53.

48

Ibid., p. 3251.

49

Ibid., p. 3253.

face selection or be "put through the sieve" at some point in their lives, exams and grading were a necessary experience which ought not to be further reduced.⁵⁰ Henderson felt that teachers and trustees were not facing their responsibilities by allowing students to pass without exams and to enter university with a minimum of work.⁵¹

Earl McKellar, MLA for Souris-Killarney, accused the government of "making it easy for the students" and warned that it was a "tough, rough world."⁵² The Conservatives further impugned the NDP government on the topic of discipline. According to J. Frank Johnston, for the average student discipline was necessary for serious study to take place.⁵³ Bob Banman, MLA for La Verendrye, claimed that there had been a "dilution of the quality of education" under the NDP and that standards of discipline had "taken a step backwards."⁵⁴

During the 1975 legislative session, the Conservatives continued to accuse the government of fostering unsound permissive education. J. Frank Johnston claimed that the newly adopted credit system was being "outsmarted by the students" and that the "do your own thing" curriculum was producing students who could not "read or spell" and were thus unprepared for adulthood. Furthermore, he suggested that the government's apparent belief that students had an inherent desire to study and required little discipline was naive.⁵⁵ In the same vein, McKellar

⁵⁰ Ibid., 8 May 1974, p. 3257.

⁵¹ Ibid., 9 May 1974, p. 3336.

⁵² Ibid., 10 May 1974, p. 3408.

⁵³ Manitoba, Debates, 13 May 1974, p. 3427.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 13 May 1974, p. 3424.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 8 April 1975, p. 1083.

alleged that because of the government's lack of leadership students could not read, write or add and faced the subsequent possibility of going "down under."⁵⁶ Education critic McGill was displeased that despite the millions of dollars spent on education by the government, large numbers of students were graduating from high school "illiterate." The fact that more students were remaining within the school system in comparison to the past failed to impress the Conservatives. They maintained that quantity was no proper replacement for quality, and that even good students were becoming victims of "rampant optionalism." The fact that some Manitoban universities felt compelled to offer remedial courses for freshmen indicated to the Conservative party that education standards had indeed dropped.⁵⁷

Liberal criticism of democratization was less marked. Marion reiterated the alarm of the Conservatives regarding the credit system which he felt allowed students to take "Mickey Mouse" courses. He accused the new system of "pandering" to the qualities of the "sub-culture" (cooperation rather than competition, experiencing rather than achieving, and the denial of work for work's sake) rather than challenging students to strive for excellence. In view of the reportedly "flagrant incapability" of many high school graduates, he urged the government to return to the teaching of the "three R's." In Marion's view:

56

Ibid., 10 April 1975, p. 1168.

57

Ibid., McGill, 11 April 1975, pp. 1191, 1194.

Making a fun place out of our schools will never develop the person needed in our society to meet the challenges of tomorrow.⁵⁸

In contrast to his Liberal associate, however, Axworthy adopted a progressive position commending the democratization of schools as an improvement over the traditional system characterized by discipline, memorization, neat rows of desks, and "intellectual authoritarianism."⁵⁹

The government's policy of community schools drew divided reactions from the opposition. The Liberal party maintained its earlier progressive stance and urged the NDP to consider using empty classrooms to house day-cares or health clinics as a method of developing multi-purpose schools.⁶⁰ The Conservative party, on the other hand, viewed the attempt to develop community schools under the REAP program as an "extravagant waste of money" and labelled the program "RAPE."⁶¹

As during the government's first term in office, the policy of experimentation continued to be unpopular in the years 1974-75. Once again, the issue revolved around the legitimacy of the Planning and Research Branch headed by Orlikow. The Branch was branded as an example of government "fat"; as an "enigma" worrisome to the public; and as a "haven for the friends of the NDP and friends of friends of the NDP."⁶² Both the Liberals and Conservatives accused the Branch

58

Ibid., 9 May 1974, p. 3339.

59

Ibid., 14 May 1974, p. 3513.

60

Idem, 9 May 1974, p. 3292.

61

Manitoba, Debates, Graham, 8 April 1975, p. 1089; Ibid., McKellar, 10 April 1975, p. 1168.

62

Ibid., Bud Sherman MLA for Fort Garry, 7 April 1975, p. 1034; Ibid., Spivak, 8 April 1975, p. 1054; Ibid., Patrick, 10 April 1975, p. 1136.

of failing to conduct substantive research. One Conservative critic suggested that the activities of the Branch manifested a total "waste of money"; another, that the research conducted could have been done just as well by teachers and principals; and still another, that the Branch's experiments were short-term, disruptive and ill-received by school divisions.⁶³ Axworthy summarized the opposition's criticisms of Planning and Research's effectiveness by suggesting that the Branch avoided the "hard issues" of concern to educators and the public such as declining enrolments, education finances and open area classrooms. He decried the Branch's activities as "planting petunias" -- short term pilot projects which left no lasting impact on the problems facing educators.⁶⁴ Of equal concern to the opposition was the presence of Planning and Research itself. Deep suspicion and dislike existed towards this branch which was considered to have been politically imposed from "above." Allegations persisted that Planning and Research was the source of low morale within the Department of Education and "brooding" within the civil service because of the ambiguity as to its authority and the qualifications of its staff.⁶⁵ At one point,⁶⁶ Hanuschak was warned that the Branch would be his "downfall."

During 1974-75 the government's policy of equalization also met with mixed reactions from opposition members. The Conservatives, in general, were adamantly opposed to the expenditure of public money for the provision of special assistance to under-privileged groups.

63

Ibid., Sherman, 8 April 1975, p. 1050; J.F. Johnston, 8 April 1975, p. 1083; Ibid., Craik, 8 April 1975, p. 1078.

64

Ibid., 7 April 1975, pp. 1032-33.

65

Manitoba, Debates, McGill, 8 April 1975, p. 1072; Ibid., Patrick, 10 April 1975, p. 1136.

66

Ibid., Patrick, 10 April 1975, p. 1140.

The nutrition program which fed needy children in inner-city schools was attacked by Henderson as "just another form of socialism" exemplifying the "cradle to grave" control the NDP sought to exercise over people's lives. He argued that it was unfair to place the expense of feeding the children of irresponsible parents on others and that schools should not usurp the role of parents.⁶⁷ Similarly, McKellar accused the government of wasting money on frivolities such as the school milk program while ignoring the more important issue of overbearing school taxes.⁶⁸ Sherman stated that assistance programs such as the nutrition program constituted undesirable "spoon-feeding," "big brotherism," and "paternalism"; and urged the government to encourage the qualities of "enterprise" and "self-dependency" in order to provide nutrition for the "spirit of the individual" rather than "welfarism."⁶⁹ In sharp contrast to his party, Spivak maintained the progressive position which he held since 1969. He reproached the government for providing inner-city children with deficient "piecemeal" programs.⁷⁰ At one point, he had advocated the creation of experimental elementary schools complete with "cottage industries" to provide work for mothers while their children were in school. These schools were to be better suited to the needs of inner-city children by offering,

67

Ibid., 10 April 1975, p. 1133.

68

Ibid., 10 April 1975, p. 1168.

69

Ibid., 12 May 1975, p. 2405.

70

Ibid., 7 April 1975, p. 1021.

in the case of Indian and Metis children for example, special programs featuring Native Studies. The ultimate aim of these schools would be to prepare inner-city students for re-entry into the regular school system by grade seven. In his proposal, Spivak went so far as to suggest providing food, clothing and housing for the participants.⁷¹

Like Spivak, Liberal members approved of the attempts of the NDP government to equalize opportunity for deprived groups. They praised the nutrition program and urged its expansion to all of Manitoba.⁷² Criticism of the government reflected an acceptance of the policy but a dissatisfaction as to the level and scope of its activities.⁷³

As in the earlier period, the government's policy of extending minority language rights drew practically no debate in 1974 and 1975. Evidence that the support given this policy during the government's first term in office continued can be found in the reaction to the legislation which introduced the use of "transitional languages." Bill 36 was described by one member of the opposition as "a very human step and it merits a great deal of support."⁷⁴

During the period from 1969 to 1975 the NDP government's

⁷¹ Ibid., 7 October 1969, p. 1451.

⁷² Ibid., Axworthy, 12 May 1975, p. 2401.

⁷³ Idem, 7 April 1975, p. 1025.

⁷⁴ Manitoba, Debates, Marion, 22 April 1974, p. 2651.

educational policies received few commendations from the party's political opponents in Manitoba's legislature. Opposition to most of the Schreyer administration's policies usually originated from either ideological differences or dissatisfaction with the methods of implementation used to achieve stated goals. In formulating their specific criticisms of the government's programs, Liberal, Conservative, Social Credit and Independent members often relied upon the views of professional educators and school trustees. These two groups, represented by their professional associations, thus provided the NDP's political opponents with ammunition for their attacks on the government's policies.

CHAPTER XI

REACTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

The reactions of the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees (MAST) to the NDP government's education policies during the period from 1969 to 1975 were not as strident as those of the opposing political parties in the legislature. Both the MTS, representing approximately 1200 public school teachers, and MAST, representing trustees from Manitoba's forty-seven school divisions, maintained cordial relations with the government. They sought to safeguard their interests and assert their views through their publications and, more important, through annual meetings with the Schreyer administration at which their convention resolutions and briefs were discussed. The government's policies, quite naturally, received closer scrutiny by the MTS, whose members were directly affected, than by MAST whose members were part-time administrators. Although the perspectives and interests of these two groups were sometimes adversary, their reactions to the NDP's educational policies during 1969-75 were similar on many issues.

The reactions of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, as reflected by their publication The Manitoba Teacher and their briefs to the government, indicate an over-all support for the objectives of the government's policies. This was tempered, however, by a perpetual MTS complaint that teachers were neither consulted prior to major decisions, nor given adequate preparation and support to implement those decisions thereafter. Nonetheless, proposed changes were,

at the outset, favourably received whenever the Society's attention digressed from its main preoccupation with such topics as retirement plans, certification procedures, and salary disputes. The importance of these types of issues to the MTS is exemplified by the fact that four of the five questions posed by the Society to Manitoba's three political parties prior to the 1973 provincial election, to solicit their views regarding MTS concerns, dealt with subjects such as bargaining rights pertaining to the welfare of the teaching profession.¹

Within the period 1969-75 the sentiments of the MTS towards the government's policies experienced notable changes. During the government's first term in office, the MTS adopted a reformist stance. It reiterated the government's belief that the western industrial world was in a period of rapid technological change which necessitated new directions in education.² While cautioning that change should be enacted gradually and with appropriate assistance to teachers, the MTS commended the new government's efforts to alter the school system which the Society's president in 1970, Ed Kowalchuk, described as being organized in a "linear" fashion similar to the military and industry.³ The president of the Winnipeg Teachers' Association (WTA), an area group within the MTS, indicated similar sentiments in 1971 when he

¹ MTS, Manitoba Teacher 51(June 1973):1.

² Ibid., 48(September-October 1969):29.

³ Ibid., 48 (March 1970):5.

described the educational system as a "sausage factory."⁴ Given this initial perspective, such concepts as individualization, open area, and humanizing education were given considerable attention at MTS conferences and in the Society's periodical. The interest of the MTS in educational innovation during 1969-73 coincided with the same interest on the part of the public as perceived by MTS officials.⁵

By 1974, however, a shift occurred in the sentiments of the MTS and letters to the editor in The Manitoba Teacher urging teachers to "Throw away the curriculum guide...Be yourself...Act like a teacher, not a jailor," were being replaced by letters warning teachers not to submit to current educational "bandwagons" and the "Lewis Carroll" philosophy of education being commonly advocated.⁶ In 1974, the MTS presented a brief to the government which questioned the degree of "liberalism and progressiveness" advanced by provincial authorities.⁷ The following year, the MTS President, Phyllis Moore, informed delegates at the annual general meeting that "militancy may become an increasingly more realistic means to defend the quality of education in Manitoba...."⁸ The Society's shift in attitude was partly due to its concern about

⁴ Winnipeg Tribune, 28 April 1971.

⁵ MTS, Manitoba Teacher 50 (June 1972):6.

⁶ Ibid., p. 7; see also Ibid., 52(June 1974):2; Ibid., 53(March 1975):5.

⁷ Ibid., 53(November 1974):1.

⁸ Ibid., 53(April 1975):1.

the growing public criticism of the school system as one overemphasizing frills, providing too many options, and failing to provide discipline and basic skills. According to Moore, teachers were tired of taking the blame for "hastily devised" programs which failed.⁹

The NDP government's policy of decentralization was favourably received in principle by the MTS but as time went on reservations emerged. The abolition of external examinations in 1970 was initially welcomed by the Society; but, in 1973 the MTS reminded the Minister of Education that a replacement form of evaluation was needed to fill the void.¹⁰ The attempts of the Department of Education to modify its own role and structure were considered consistent with the need for reform. By 1974, however, the MTS was alarmed at the "lack of clear lines of authority and responsibility which seems to prevail within the Department" which made it difficult to obtain "statements of Departmental directions in education."¹¹ The government's efforts to transfer curriculum responsibility to teachers was also praised by the MTS. The Society welcomed the decision in 1970 to make curriculum guidelines suggestive rather than mandatory and greeted the new flexibility provided by Bill 13's regulations allowing textbook grants to be used to purchase a wider selection of instructional material.¹² In 1975, the MTS passed a

⁹ Ibid., 53(December 1974):4.

¹⁰ Ibid., 48(March 1970):5; Ibid., 52(October 1973):1.

¹¹ MTS, "Brief To The Honorable Edward Schreyer, Premier of Manitoba, The Honorable Ben Hanuschak, Minister of Education And The Cabinet," Winnipeg, Fall 1974, p. 2.(Mimeographed.)

¹² Idem, Manitoba Teacher 49(April-May 1971):2.

resolution at its annual general meeting reaffirming the importance of teachers exercising "final responsibility" for curricular decisions.¹³ With the acceptance of added responsibility, however, the MTS admonished the government that teachers would need additional support. In the case of Bill 58 in particular, which was passed in 1975 but not proclaimed, the Society was concerned about potential difficulties of implementation without extensive prior preparation and assistance to teachers.

The one change which evoked the most reaction from the MTS, among all of the changes made by the Schreyer administration during 1969-75, was the introduction of Bill 71. The passing of this legislation in 1971 which allowed students to be left in the charge of teacher aides, social workers and other non-teachers sparked panic among the MTS. Its executive held an emergency session after which it sent letters to all teachers in Manitoba alerting them to the legislation and the fact that MAST had submitted a brief to the government advocating the allowance of teacher aides to act as substitutes for up to five continuous school days. The Society was horrified at the prospect of the government allowing school divisions to leave students in the care and charge of "un-trained, non-certified individuals who could be allowed to 'teach' in the absence of qualified teachers."¹⁴

The MTS informed Hanuschak that the use of non-teachers as substitutes would be "illegal" because the phrase "in the care and charge" found in Bill 71 did not constitute "teaching". To further bolster their

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Ibid., 53(April 1975):7.

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Ibid., 50(October 1971):1.

position, the Society launched an urgent study into all aspects of
 auxiliary personnel in schools.¹⁵ The subsequent report affirmed
 that auxiliary personnel could improve the quality of education
 provided that they not be used as substitutes; that they not be
 allowed to perform certain teaching procedures; and that they remained
 under the complete supervision of the teachers.¹⁶ This report was
 adopted at the 1972 annual general meeting along with a restrictive
 policy resolution pertaining to differentiated staffing projects.
 This latter resolution sought to safeguard the interests of teaching
 staffs by demanding teacher control over such projects and guarantees
 of additional teacher supports.¹⁷ Despite the fact that the regulations
 later established by the government pertaining to Bill 71 reflected
 the wishes of the MTS, the Society remained ever vigilant in the
 following years as to infractions of the regulations.¹⁸ In fact, the
 MTS produced a guide booklet for teachers to consult, and urged teachers
 to report any "abuses."¹⁹ The MTS claim that a "blurring" of teacher
 and teacher aide roles would reduce the state of education to that of
 the 1950s persisted throughout the period 1969-75.²⁰

The government's policy of democratizing the school was also

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Ibid.

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MTS, New Staffing Patterns and Quality Education (Winnipeg:
 MTS, 1972), pp. 94-95.

17

Ibid., pp. 103, 153-55.

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Idem, Manitoba Teacher 50(January 1972):1.

19

Ibid., 53(November 1974):2.

20

Ibid., 48(September-October 1969):31.

initially supported by the MTS but drew increasing criticism as time went on because of the way in which it was implemented. Articles promoting the adoption of innovative and progressive methods received considerable attention in the Society's periodical during 1969-73. The Interim Core Report was well received by the MTS in 1970, and in the same year the Society presented the government with a major study on educational finance which included recommendations, such as the expansion of teachers' decision-making powers, which were harmonious with NDP policies.²¹ In a speech to the Winnipeg Rotary Club in 1971, Emerson Arnett, general secretary of the MTS, praised the government's efforts to democratize the schools. He lauded recent trends which encouraged teachers to become guides to students rather than merely information givers; which placed more emphasis on decision-making, developing personal and social goals, and coping with change rather than information transference and memorization; and which questioned the overall goals of education.²² As well, the MTS actively cooperated with the Department of Education to provide conferences and in-services on such themes as "Interpersonal Relationships in Schools" to inform teachers of progressive education.²³ In 1973 the Society published a teacher's guide for student evaluation which closely approximated the government's views. It encouraged the expansion of subjectivity in

²¹ Ibid., 48(March 1970):5; Ibid., 48(June 1970):7.

²² MTS, Manitoba Teacher 50(October 1971):6.

²³ Ibid., 51(December 1972):4.

evaluation and the inclusion of consideration for the students' emotional as well as intellectual development. According to the guide, evaluation is an "art" which "prohibits accurate assessment and communication of such assessment to other persons."²⁴

By 1974, however, enthusiasm began to wane and the Society's belief that change must be gradual, in order to give teachers ample opportunity to test the merit of innovations, strengthened.²⁵ The Revised High School Program, an out-growth of the Core Report, evoked misgivings from the MTS. It was not pleased that under the new credit system academic courses were to receive only 12 percent of a student's time rather than 18 percent as before. This implied, according to the MTS, that teachers would be obliged to cover the same amount of course material as before but in less time; be asked to teach more courses; and be required to assume new duties related to school and student initiated courses. As well, the credit system provided students with more unassigned time which, if unharnessed, would lead to a lowering of the quality of education. MTS President Harvey Kingdon urged teachers to convey their concerns to their trustees, superintendents and the parents of their students.²⁶ A subsequent MTS survey of its members revealed that approximately 50 percent of of the respondents felt that the credit system would result in the

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Idem, Student Evaluation A Step-By-Step Approach (Winnipeg: MTS, 1973), p. 2.

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Idem, Manitoba Teacher 48(November-December 1969):31-32; Ibid., 49 (December 1970):2.

26

Ibid., 52(June 1974):2.

"watering down of standards."²⁷ In the fall of 1974, the Society sent a special delegation to present its annual brief to the government. In this brief the MTS outlined its concern over the "dichotomy between the Government's authorization of new directions or programs in education and its provision of strategies and resources for implementation."²⁸ The MTS cited the Revised High School Program and individualization as cases wherein it endorsed the proposals, but was dissatisfied because subsequent implementation failed to support teachers by lowering pupil-teacher ratios. In the following year, President Leo Duguay similarly described continuous progress²⁹ as a failure for lack of proper implementation.

Also of interest to the MTS was the "imbalance" eventually perceived by its members regarding the Department of Education's activities in the area of professional development. It felt that the government was over-emphasizing the importance of improving interpersonal relations at the expense of improving the teacher skill areas. Too much stress was being placed on social skills in contrast to teaching skills.³⁰ School discipline, as well, became a topic of concern. In 1974, a MTS survey of Winnipeg parents indicated that a strong majority (67 percent) felt that discipline in schools was too lax.³¹

²⁷ Ibid., 52(June 1975):7.

²⁸ Idem, "1974 MTS Brief to Government," p. 3.

²⁹ MTS, Manitoba Teacher 54(October 1975):2.

³⁰ Idem, "1974 MTS Brief to Government," p. 3.

³¹ Idem, Manitoba Teacher 53(January 1975):1.

The following year, a WTA survey of its teachers and principals revealed that 75 percent of the respondents believed that there had been a deterioration in student behaviour in the last five years. Eighty percent of the respondents felt that the WTA should take action.³² Later, at the annual general meeting of the MTS in 1975, because the question of discipline was becoming "a matter of paramount concern in many schools, as well as society in general," a resolution³³ was passed establishing an investigative committee. Subsequently, in 1976, a random survey of parents, students and teachers was jointly carried out by the MTS, the Department of Education, and other educational organizations. The study's results, however, indicated a general satisfaction with Manitoba's schools and that "the scope of the discipline problem is not as great as was perceived in the original M.T.S. resolution."³⁴

The NDP government's community schools policy was generally endorsed by the MTS. In 1970, the Society's educational finance study recommended the increased coordination of health, welfare and educational services through the school system.³⁵ In the following year, the MTS advocated architectural flexibility in school construction to facilitate the widest use of school buildings. Society spokesman Emerson Arnett prophesized the demise of local control unless decentralization

³² WTA, "Study On Student Behaviour," Winnipeg, 1975, p. 30-31. (Mimeographed)

³³ MTS, Discipline In Manitoba Schools (Winnipeg: MTS, 1976), coverpage.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁵ Idem, Manitoba Teacher, 49(September 1970):1.

and community involvement increased.³⁶ In 1974, the Society adopted a resolution urging the government to use schools as a means of providing health clinic services throughout Manitoba.³⁷

The MTS's support for more citizen participation in schools partially originated from a point of self-interest. Increased parental involvement in schools was seen in 1971 as a method of lessening the public's "current disenchantment" with the school system. The Society believed that the schools had "not done a good job of keeping the public informed"; and therefore, to ameliorate the "alienation," school advisory committees involving parents, students, teachers and administrators should be formed.³⁸ According to Robert Gordon, associate secretary of the MTS in 1971, lack of communication had resulted in a situation wherein "we do not know what the public wants and the public does not know what we are doing."³⁹ Thus, to educate its members and to promote citizen participation, The Manitoba Teacher carried a number of prominent articles discussing the benefits of involving parents and volunteers in the classroom.⁴⁰ At the same time, however, the MTS cautioned its members that differentiated staffing, including the use of parent volunteers, was not necessarily better than traditional staffing patterns and recommended that staffing projects meet MTS guidelines.⁴¹

³⁶ Ibid., 49(May-June 1971):8; Winnipeg Free Press, 13 March 1971.

³⁷ MTS, Manitoba Teacher 53(April 1974):5.

³⁸ Ibid., 49(May-June 1971):8.

³⁹ Ibid., 50(October-November 1971):12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 51(June 1973):5; Ibid., 53(November 1974):6.

⁴¹ MTS, Manitoba Teacher 51(September-October 1972):4.

The Society's reactions to the government's policy of experimentation was, again, one of agreement in principle but disapproval as to execution. The establishment of a reconstituted Planning and Research Branch was initially favoured by the MTS in 1971, and the government's encouragement of experimentation on a school to school basis was praised.⁴² In the following year, however, to gain some control over experimentation, the Society urged Hanuschak to create a committee composed of representatives from the various educational bodies to be responsible for allocating Demonstration grants.⁴³ Also in 1972, the WTA refused to support an activity involving the experimental Argyle school established cooperatively by the Department of Education and the Winnipeg School Division. The WTA protested a project which involved students receiving instruction from tradesmen, rather than vocational teachers, in the re-building of old homes.⁴⁴ By 1974, the MTS had clearly developed a negative opinion of the activities of the controversial Planning and Research Branch. In its 1974 brief to the Cabinet, the Society stated its support for a Planning and Research Branch in principle but also stated its disapproval of the "work and mode of operation" of the existing Branch whose work it perceived as "numerous unrelated projects and studies that lack both goals and direction."⁴⁵ Moreover, President Phyllis Moore, in defending teachers

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Ibid., 49(April-May 1971):1; Ibid., 50 (October 1971):6.

43

Ibid., 50(April 1972):4.

44

Ibid., 51(October-November 1972):3.

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Idem, "1974 MTS Brief to Government," pp.2-3.

against current public criticism, suggested that part of the blame should be directed at Department officials whose "fuzzy" thinking and new innovations were often foisted upon school staffs without consultation.⁴⁶ Misgivings about Planning and Research intensified in 1975 over the Branch's secrecy and the qualifications of its staff. Moore reiterated the ominous statement of past President Walter Nowasad that there existed "a curtain that screened" the operations of Planning and Research.⁴⁷

The government's policy of equalization was favourably received by MTS with only a few reservations. In 1970, the Society endorsed the government's policy by advocating that "immediate steps" be taken to improve opportunities for low-income, racial and ethnic groups.⁴⁸ Specifically, it recommended that salary grants be increased for teachers north of the fifty-second parallel; that salary grants be provided to school divisions to cover resource teachers and psychologists; and that the number of authorized teacher grants be increased for divisions which educate Native or immigrant children for whom only part of the school program was in English or French.⁴⁹ The following year, the Society formed a special area group called the Association of Indian and Metis Education (AIME). Composed of Native educators, its function was to provide consultative services to fellow teachers interested in Native education.⁵⁰ As well, the MTS urged the govern-

⁴⁶ Idem, Manitoba Teacher 53(December 1974):4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 53(April 1975):1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 49(September 1970):1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 49(January 1971):7.

⁵⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, 25 October 1971.

ment in 1974 to increase the Vocational and Establishment grants for industrial arts.⁵¹ The Society believed that measures such as these would assist in equalizing existing disparities between rich and poor divisions and encouraged the government to proceed towards equality of opportunity regardless of cost.⁵²

Two aspects of the government's policy were not supported whole-heartedly. Although the MTS expressed appreciation for Equalization grants and other changes to the Foundation Program, it consistently maintained throughout 1969-75 that the most significant grant categories, such as the salary grants, had not been upgraded since 1967 with the result being an actual reduction of the provincial share of education costs. Claiming that this in turn reinforced disparities to the disadvantage of Northern and rural divisions, the MTS appealed to the government to improve the Foundation Program appropriately.⁵³ This stance paralleled that of the Conservative party and at that party's 1975 provincial convention, Phyllis Moore unofficially described Hanuschak as a "weak minister of education" whose Equalization grants were so small they were "almost an insult."⁵⁴

The NDP government's efforts to train disadvantaged persons to become teachers and teachers aides for depressed areas were considered admirable, but were not well accepted by the Society. Conflict began in 1972 when the WTA, after having previously agreed in principle, rejected the implementation of the Winnipeg Centre Project due to

51
MTS, Manitoba Teacher 52 (April 1974):4-5.

52
Idem, "1974 MTS Brief to Government," p.7.

53
Ibid., p. 17.

54
Winnipeg Free Press, 10 March 1975.

unsatisfactory arrangements. The project was nonetheless approved by special authority of the Minister of Education and established despite a formal protest by the WTA.⁵⁵ By 1974, the MTS was further dismayed at "the apparent tendency of the Department of Education to give conditional grants to conduct projects in teacher education which are, for the most part, hastily planned and poorly evaluated."⁵⁶ The MTS, for its part, advocated "orderly experimentation" in teacher education controlled by the teacher training institutions, and recommended that the government fund those bodies to conduct any future programs.⁵⁷

Like the opposition parties in the legislature, the MTS reacted affirmatively to the NDP government's minority languages policy. The government's Bill 113 which established both French and English as languages of instruction was lauded by the Society who in 1969 had passed a resolution accepting the right of parents to have their children taught in either official language.⁵⁸ In 1972, in recognition of the government's policy, the MTS conferred special status upon the Society's Educateurs Franco Manitobains area group. This group of members was made the official advisory body to the MTS on issues

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MTS, Manitoba Teacher, 51(October-November 1972):1; Ibid., 51 (February 1973):2.

56

Idem, "1974 MTS Brief to Government," p. 11.

57

Ibid., pp. 11-12.

58

Idem, Manitoba Teacher 51(December 1972):5.

relating to the French language and was given administrative responsibility⁵⁹ over the Society's services to French teachers. In 1974, the MTS urged the government to provide additional grants to school divisions to facilitate the implementation of the changes made to Section 258 of The Public Schools Act. The Society desired these grants to be used not only for French language programs, but for transitional language programs as well.⁶⁰ In the same year, the MTS passed a resolution commending the Minister of Education for introducing high school credit equivalency for fluency in languages not on the curriculum.⁶¹

The reactions of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees to the educational policies of the NDP government during 1969-75 were not significantly unlike those of the MTS. In general, MAST supported the policies in principle but as time progressed it became increasingly critical of the manner of implementation. Whereas 1974 marked a turning point in MTS's attitude, it was not until 1975 that MAST took a critical stance regarding the direction and methods of the Department of Education. During the period from 1969 to 1975 the government's policies did not receive from MAST the scrutiny they did from the MTS. There were two reasons for this. The members of MAST, as part-time administrators, were not as involved with schools on a daily basis as were the members of the MTS. Also, like the opposition parties

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Ibid., 51(January 1975):5.

60

Idem, "1974 MTS Brief to Government," pp. 18,20.

61

MTS, Manitoba Teacher 52(April 1974):5.

in the legislature, school trustees were preoccupied with school taxes and educational costs. Yet, they did not altogether ignore the government's various policies outside their main concern.

Even though traditionally a strong advocate of local control, MAST viewed the government's policy of decentralization with some apprehension. The Department's plan to establish a regional field office in Morden to serve Southern school divisions, for instance, was met with suspicion. Rural trustees saw no purpose for the creation of an intermediary level of "bureaucracy" and expressed fear that it would jeopardize local autonomy. They preferred additional grants with which to supply their own field services.⁶²

Although the abolition of Departmental examinations in 1970 was acceptable to MAST, by 1973 the Association was no longer confident that standards were being maintained. At its annual convention it passed a resolution requesting that the government "make available some...form of provincial-wide evaluation...and thus encourage maintenance of educational standards throughout the province."⁶³

Since no such initiative was taken by the government, in 1975 MAST established an "Assessment Centre" project to provide interested divisions with tests to ascertain the Mathematics and English abilities of their high school students in comparison to provincial norms.⁶⁴

62 Manitoba Association of School Trustees, Newsletter 10(January 1974):3.

63 MTS, Manitoba Teacher 52(September 1973):5.

64 Winnipeg Free Press, 8 October 1975.

By 1975, MAST was so concerned about the ever-increasing truancy problems that its officials met with the Attorney General of Manitoba to request that "more teeth" be put into the School Attendance Act to assist divisions in administering the responsibility given to them in 1970.⁶⁵ Also in 1975, MAST submitted a confidential brief in conjunction with the MTS on the "Role And Operation Of The Department Of Education." In this brief MAST expressed its dissatisfaction with the execution of the government's policies. In the area of decentralization, despite its appreciation of the government's "enlightened attitude...towards flexibility," the Association was dismayed at the Department's organizational disarray and lack of delineation of responsibility. According to MAST, there appeared to be "duplication, overlapping, competition and general confusion regarding various functions."⁶⁶ Moreover, the Department's attempts to decentralize by assisting school divisions to develop their own goals, methods and evaluation, "unfortunately...sometimes results in more confusion than logical planning." The government's practice of planning programs unilaterally, and then encouraging their adoption with financial incentives, was criticized by MAST because these funds were usually temporary and the programs were not sold on their own merits. The public image of the Department of Education, according to

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MAST, Newsletter 11(June 1975):2.

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Manitoba Teachers' Society and Manitoba Association of School Trustees, "Brief On The Role And Operation Of The Department of Education," Winnipeg, February 1975, pp. 2,5.

the Association, had also suffered. Due to the lack of direction, the existence of internal disorganization, and the deterioration of civil service morale, the Department's "credibility" had shrunk.⁶⁷ To resolve some of these difficulties, MAST recommended that the government draft a clearly articulated overall plan for education in Manitoba, clarify the functions of each Department branch, and delineate the levels of staff authority.⁶⁸

MAST's reactions to the NDP government's policy of democratization were initially favourable. MAST accepted the bulk of the Core Report's recommendations as "good" and stated only its reservations regarding the financial implications inherent in increasing course options.⁶⁹ As late as 1974 MAST was espousing progressive views and the need to design an educational system for "tomorrow" for students living in a world characterized by "rapid change" soon to enter the "twenty-first century."⁷⁰ Indications of a changing attitude, however, were emerging. After receiving job applications for a particular staff vacancy which were allegedly untidy, error-prone and ungrammatical, MAST officials asked: "Why is our school system

67
Ibid., pp. 7-9.

68
Ibid., pp. 10-11.

69
MAST, "Presentation To The Government Of Manitoba On Resolutions Passed At The 1974 Convention Of The Manitoba Association Of School Trustees," Winnipeg, 2 May 1974, pp. 25-26. (Mimeographed.)

70
Idem, "1974 Convention of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees: Record of Proceedings," Winnipeg, 1974, pp. 15-21. (Mimeographed.)

producing people who cannot read, write or spell properly?"⁷¹ By 1975 MAST was reappraising its philosophic position and at its annual conference, delegates were warned by the president of MAST that trustees, being caught in the midst of a "snowstorm" of educational philosophies, should cautiously "move from the tried to the untried only as we see the need for it."⁷² As well, the key guest speaker at the 1975 annual conference, unlike his predecessors of recent years, did not advocate progressive education. Rather, he urged the delegates to use "common sense," to avoid the "fuzzy thinking" of the recent past and to reverse the drop in education standards.⁷³ In its joint brief with the MTS in the same year, MAST stated its concern for the maintenance of high standards given the reduction of high school graduation requirements under the credit system.⁷⁴

The Schreyer government's policy of community schools was generally well received by MAST. By 1974 all of Manitoba's school divisions were allowing the community use of schools and 82 percent of the divisions had established a policy governing the issue.⁷⁵

⁷¹ MAST, Newsletter 10(March 1974):8.

⁷² Dean D. Durston as cited in MAST, "1975 Convention of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees: Record of Proceedings," Winnipeg, 1975, p. 4. (Mimeographed.)

⁷³ John F. Ellis, "Educational Individuality: The New Conformity," speech delivered to MAST annual convention, Winnipeg, 7 March 1975, pp. 4, 10, 12. (Mimeographed.)

⁷⁴ MTS and MAST, "Brief on the Role of the Department of Education," p. 5.

⁷⁵ MAST, Newsletter 10(November 1974):4.

MAST was not pleased, however, that the government sometimes took a "prescriptive posture":

Apparently those responsible for developing the programs have very definite ideas concerning their operation, which makes local involvement a facade rather than a reality.⁷⁶

The government's REAP program was also viewed as contradictory to the philosophy of the Revised High School Program which necessitated school consolidation in rural areas. Moreover, MAST was indignant that Department officials encouraged small communities to retain their small schools contrary to school division plans and in 1973 requested that Hanuschak not interfere in local disputes.⁷⁷ According to MAST, such practice "undermines the autonomy of the local level" and "does a disservice to the students of the divisions."⁷⁸ In 1975 MAST urged the government to involve teachers, administrators and trustees in a "meaningful way" on all task forces and planning committees and to show "responsible leadership" by supporting locally developed programs.⁷⁹

The need for educational research was never denied by MAST during the period 1969-75. However, the Association's attitude towards the Planning and Research Branch under the direction of Orlikow

⁷⁶ MTS and MAST, "Brief on the Role of the Department of Education," p. 10.

⁷⁷ Winnipeg Tribune, 12 December 1973.

⁷⁸ MTS and MAST, "Brief on the Role of the Department of Education," p. 8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

increasingly worsened and climaxed with a request by both the MTS and MAST that he be dismissed.⁸⁰ MAST offered several reasons for its dissatisfaction with the Branch. It claimed that Planning and Research was uncooperative in sharing information; that there existed "suspicion and hostility" towards the Branch because of its refusal or inability to identify clear purposes for its multitude of projects; that too often these projects showed an "obvious lack of planning"; and that little effort was made to evaluate their worth.⁸¹ Like the MTS, the Association was disturbed that a large number of "totally inexperienced, unqualified people" were being given responsibility for major projects.⁸² MAST maintained that because many of the members of Planning and Research came from outside of the teaching profession and the province there were undesirable results. These persons lacked credibility. They were unrepresentative of Manitoban educators. They worked in isolation from the major educational bodies and kept the latter uninformed of their activities. Their projects often lacked continuity because of the high staff turnover in the Branch. Thus, they had little loyalty to the province, the Department of Education, or their work because of their short term commitment.⁸³ MAST was also critical of the ambiguity regarding Orlikow's responsibilities and the negative, "if not

⁸⁰ Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," p. 67.

⁸¹ MTS and MAST, "Brief on the Role of the Department of Education," pp.4-7.

⁸² Ibid., p. 5.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

derogatory," public statements allegedly made by his subordinates about the MTS and MAST. The Association warned that such "intemperate statements" would not foster cooperation.⁸⁴ To resolve some of these difficulties, in 1975 MAST recommended that future Departmental programs be endorsed by teachers and trustees prior to implementation, and that the results of project evaluations be provided to all school divisions. MAST further recommended that Departmental personnel who were to work with educators be professionals in their field.⁸⁵

The NDP government's policy of equalization coincided with MAST's sentiments in many areas. The Association's policy manual, for instance, provided a statement in complete accord with the government's philosophy:

All children regardless of their location or economic status should have educational opportunity for the maximum development of their potential.⁸⁶

However, the basic approach advocated by MAST for advancing equality of opportunity was similar to that of the MTS and the Conservative party. It centered upon the enlargement of the government's portion of the Foundation Program to lessen education costs carried by property tax revenues. At the same time, however, MAST recognized the need for special assistance to certain groups, such as Natives, and encouraged the government to increase its support in this regard. MAST favoured

84
Ibid., pp. 5, 9, 10.

85
Ibid., pp. 8, 11.

86
MAST, "1974 Policy Manual," Winnipeg, January 1974, p. 8.
(Mimeographed.)

increasing Native participation in education and suggested that
 Natives be represented on Departmental committees.⁸⁷ As well, MAST
 promoted the idea of Northern allowance grants for teachers in
 Northern divisions and the enhancement of operating grants to school
 divisions educating non-resident Natives.⁸⁸ To assist those not
 suited for university, MAST supported the expansion of vocational
 and supplementary programs. In 1972 the Association called upon
 the government to increase Vocational grants from \$1500 to \$3000.⁸⁹
 In 1974 MAST advocated that optional courses such as Home Economics,
 Music and Art qualify for authorized teacher grants.⁹⁰ To assist all
 divisions in meeting the special needs of their students, MAST also urged
 the government to include additional personnel such as social workers
 and therapists within the Foundation Program's grants.⁹¹ The NDP
 government acted upon many of these recommendations and the changes,
 including the introduction of Equalization grants, were "welcomed"

87
 Ibid., p. 15.

88
 MAST, "Resolutions Passed At The 1970 Convention Of The Manitoba
 Association Of School Trustees," Winnipeg, 16-18 November 1970,
 p. 1, (Mimeographed.); Idem, "Presentation to the Government of the
 Resolutions Passed at the 1974 Convention," pp. 7-8.

89
 Idem, "Resolutions Passed At The 1972 Convention Of The Manitoba
 Associations of School Trustees," Winnipeg, 12-14 November 1972, p.2.
 (Mimeographed.)

90
 Idem, "Presentation to the Government of the Resolutions Passed
 at the 1974 Convention," pp. 7-8.

91
 Idem, "Resolutions Passed At The 1971 Convention Of The Manitoba
 Association Of School Trustees," Winnipeg, 15-16 November 1971, p.3.
 (Mimeographed.)

by the Association.

The government's minority language policy failed to draw noteworthy reaction from MAST. After passing a resolution at its 1969 annual conference which supported the extension of languages on the high school curriculum to the elementary level, the Association made little comment on second language teaching in subsequent years.⁹³

During the period from 1969 to 1975 the educational policies of the Schreyer administration met with initially favourable reactions from the Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. As events unfolded, however, both groups, with often comparable views, withdrew their support from certain government policies. By 1975 relations between the NDP government and the two organizations had deteriorated. At the centre of many of the conflicts were the activities and modus operandi of the Planning and Research Branch. The MTS, particularly cognizant of the growing public penchant to blame the weaknesses of the school system upon teachers, increasingly sought to moderate the rate of change promoted by the government. A portion of this public disillusionment with education during 1969-75 was reflected, if not encouraged, by Manitoba's press.

92

Winnipeg Free Press, 9 March 1974.

93

Idem, 20 November 1969.

CHAPTER XII

REACTIONS OF THE PRESS

The reactions of the press in Manitoba, as represented by the province's two largest newspapers, the Winnipeg Free Press and the Winnipeg Tribune, to the NDP government's educational policies can be described as generally unfavourable, if not hostile.¹ During the period from 1969 to 1975, both dailies expressed remarkably similar attitudes on educational issues notwithstanding the tendency for Free Press editorials to be slightly more critical and Tribune staff feature articles to be occasionally supportive. In both cases, however, as time progressed the degree of general disagreement with the government's policies increased.

As with Manitoba's opposition parties and the MTS and MAST, certain policies received more attention than others by the press. The extension of minority languages, for instance, received practically no editorial attention while the government's policy of democratizing the schools was repeatedly questioned. In general, however, editorials in both dailies were consistently critical of the direction the government was leading education. During the Schreyer administration's first term in office, editorials frequently attacked high education costs and school taxes while claiming that educational standards were declining

¹ During the years 1969-75 the Winnipeg Free Press had an average circulation of approximately 136,000 while the Winnipeg Tribune had an average circulation of approximately 75,000. Cf., Canadian Advertising Rates and Data 42-48 (December 1969-75).

because of permissiveness. At one point, the government was urged to adopt a proposal made by the previous Weir administration wherein all increases in school board special levies would be subject to the approval of municipal councils and placed before the electorate by referendum if defeated.² Gradually editorial articles shifted their emphasis to the question of permissiveness.

Feature articles by staff writers and general coverage of educational news, on the other hand, were more favourable and several journalists applauded attempts at educational innovation. One reporter, for example, referred to Orlikow as an "iconoclast" whose young, spirited workers would generate "fresh air" in Manitoba's school system.³ Similarly, tones of support occasionally found their way into news articles. This, however, was more the case during the period 1969-73 than during the following two years when the growing controversy over educational standards intensified. Supportive captions such as: "Scoffer's Scorn at Open School Turns to Admiration" and "School Becomes 'More Relevant'" were replaced, for instance, by more ominous headlines such as: "Teachers Feel Government Lax In Safeguarding Standards" and "Businessmen Deplore Graduates' Lack of Communication Skills."⁴

According to Orlikow, Winnipeg's newspapers were guilty of conveying a "constant negative message" based upon an "elitist interpretation" of the purpose of schooling which caused public hostility

²
Winnipeg Tribune, 20 February 1970.

³
Idem, 2 December 1972.

⁴
Winnipeg Free Press, 13 December 1969; Idem, 25 June 1971; Winnipeg Tribune, 24 October 1974; Winnipeg Free Press, 11 December 1974.

toward the government's efforts to improve and democratize education. A 1971 Free Press editorial series by Tom Saunders entitled "A Crisis in Confidence," in Orlikow's opinion, "captured the many bogies that symbolized the collapse of Manitoba education to the elitists" and provided a theme reiterated by the Conservatives for the following six years.⁵ This series argued that despite the tripling of school costs since 1959, there had been no accompanying rise in academic standards; and that, on the contrary, standards were dropping so precipitously that parents, businessmen and universities were complaining. The primary reason for this, the articles suggested, was the adoption of American educational theories which replaced concern for performance with concern for "well-being" and which failed to recognize that the mastery of subject matter was a "prime function of schooling."⁶ The NDP government's encouragement of such concepts as individualization which permitted students to progress at their own pace, according to the Free Press,⁷ undermined this function and was "inimical to sound education."

The Tribune, likewise dissatisfied with attempts to democratize schools, advocated the maintenance of dress codes for both students and teachers and warned of "radicals" among trustees and educators who were

⁵ Orlikow, "Administrative Autobiography," pp. 14, 30.

⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 8 February 1971.

⁷ *Idem*, 29 April 1971.

bent upon mimicking American experiments.⁸ Not to be outdone by its competitor, the Free Press labelled high school students who demanded student "rights" a "cadre" of "socialist inspired" "revolutionaries."⁹ The 1972 decision by the Winnipeg School Board to abandon its "no smoking on school property" policy was criticized by both dailies as a "shirking of responsibility."¹⁰ The province's school system, wrote the Free Press, was falling under the influence of "counter-culture" values and that its greatest weakness was now "the lack of discipline, the lack of standards, without which we say goodbye to the pursuit of academic excellence and consider anything as good as anything else."¹¹ Both newspapers also claimed that unrealistic demands were now being placed upon schools.¹² According to the Tribune, the current notion of equality of opportunity was preoccupied with the school attendance of the lower classes rather than what occurred in the school itself. "Egalitarians" were seeking to use schools as a vehicle to change society rather than as an institution to educate young minds.

The preoccupation with social equality in schools is really another attempt on the part of radical elites to mould the poor in their own image.

What the poor needed, argued the editor, were schools that would "teach" them because "it is the home that perpetuates the inequality... giving some people better starts in life than others." Schools alone

⁸ Winnipeg Tribune, 3 April 1971.

⁹ Winnipeg Free Press, 24 November 1971.

¹⁰ Idem, 11 January 1972; Winnipeg Tribune, 14 January 1972.

¹¹ Winnipeg Free Press, 22 November 1972.

¹² Idem, 23 April 1973.

could not achieve the goals of the egalitarians and the educational progressives were "threatening the family and destroying the schools" in the attempt.¹³ In this vein, the Core Report's recommendations were denounced by the Free Press for ignoring "human nature" by assuming that people do not need to be "prodded" to work and for inadvertently recommending that students become victims of their own weaknesses. The Core proposals, the editor claimed, would spell "disaster" for other than top students and would lower already dropping standards.¹⁴ Another Free Press editorial lauded River East School Division's decision to offer dissatisfied parents the choice between an open area or traditional school for their children. The editorial suggested that a general parental concern existed towards open area structures because of their stress upon play, their lack of discipline, and their de-emphasis of the "3 R's."¹⁵ Both dailies alleged that the chief reason for the record high number (1,085) of Manitoba teacher resignations in 1973 was the fact that teachers were "fed up" with the lack of direction in education; the increase in permissiveness; and the attempt on the part of schools to perform too many functions.¹⁶ Students, according to the Free Press, were meanwhile the victims of "constant fashion change" in education such that half of those who went to university were "practically illiterate."¹⁷ One reason

¹³ Winnipeg Tribune, 12 November 1973.

¹⁴ Winnipeg Free Press, 28 August 1973.

¹⁵ Idem, 1 September 1973.

¹⁶ Idem, 12 September 1973; Winnipeg Tribune, 22 September 1973.

¹⁷ Winnipeg Free Press, 6 November 1973.

for this was that schools were equating "'passing' with 'scholarship'
and 'ignorance' with 'creativity'."¹⁸

The government's new credit system was described by the Free Press as a "far cry" from what education should be and it claimed that education was becoming "entertainment."¹⁹ Under the new system students would face an "option jungle," argued the editor, wherein expedient choices could damage future career opportunities and "Mickey Mouse" courses would lower the quality of education:

The result is a generation of children spending more years at school than their parents did but with dubious results in terms of education as a meaningful discipline.

The Free Press also suggested that the credit system would oblige universities to provide "bonehead" (remedial) courses in English and other key subjects.²⁰ Voicing similar sentiments, the Tribune criticized the government's proposal in 1974 to introduce a "two tier" grading system for grade twelve students which would grant either "credit" or "credit with distinction" for passing a course, while failures would not be recorded. The Tribune argued that besides the obvious problems such a system would create for employers and universities, students would be done the greatest injury. According to the editor, sheltering students from grades deprived them of information regarding their academic abilities and ill-prepared them for the real world where

¹⁸ Idem, 29 December 1973.

¹⁹ Idem, 12 March 1974.

²⁰ Idem, 11 November 1974.

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measurement and selection would not be so kind.

The continuation of the government's policy of democratization during 1974 and 1975, despite the heavy editorial criticism and growing public controversy, further antagonized Winnipeg's two dailies. In late 1974, Orlikow's comment that basketweaving could be as valid a course as any other for high school students under the credit system prompted the Free Press to ask if "silver polishing" and "pole-sitting" might not also be considered as credit courses.²² Days later, the editor wrote that the progressive philosophy still espoused by some educators, with its focus on the "way" students learn rather than "what" they learn, would lead to a "a generation of students happy in the way they learn but who, in fact, learn nothing at all."²³ To return education to its proper direction, the Free Press recommended a closer alliance of teachers and parents to compensate for the Department of Education's "ostrich-like" behaviour towards the public outcry for a return to scholastic standards and discipline.²⁴ The Tribune, similarly convinced that student abilities in the "basics" had suffered, warned that although adults had always complained about the schooling of the young, it was never before on the scale of "wide-spread ferment."²⁵

21

Winnipeg Tribune, 14 September 1974.

22

Winnipeg Free Press, 22 October 1974.

23

Idem, 28 October 1974.

24

Idem, 14 November 1974; Idem, 27 December 1974.

25

Winnipeg Tribune, 8 March 1975.

The Schreyer government's policy of decentralization was generally criticized by the press despite the fact that the concept of increased local control was popular with both Winnipeg dailies. This support for local control was evident in the Tribune's praise for the introduction of Block grants which it hoped would assist school divisions to economize.²⁶ The government's decision to make truancy the sole responsibility of school divisions was similarly lauded by the Tribune as a "refreshing reversal of the trend towards centralization"²⁷ which would also save provincial dollars. On the other hand, the Free Press in 1974 accused the government of only paying "lip service"²⁸ to local control and urged greater local autonomy. In the aggregate, the praise given the government's decentralization policy was negligible since both newspapers maintained that the government's changes caught most school divisions, in particular rural ones, unprepared for their new responsibilities resulting in an educational "vacuum."²⁹

The main initiatives of the government's policy were in fact rejected. The abolition of provincial exams in 1970 was seen as a serious error.³⁰ While the Department of Education encouraged decentralized curriculum decision-making to encourage variety, the Free Press advocated greater curricular standardization so that students would receive a uniform education across Canada to lessen student migration

²⁶ Idem, 26 March 1972.

²⁷ Idem, 29 April 1970.

²⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, 4 March 1974.

²⁹ Winnipeg Tribune, 20 December 1975.

³⁰ Idem, 15 October 1975.

difficulties.³¹ The role of school inspectors was defended as not being "redundant" as suggested by certain government officials.³²

By 1974, the "deep disappointment" the Tribune had declared it felt about the failure of the government's Guidelines For The Seventies to offer an overall plan for education turned into a conviction that the Schreyer administration's policy of decentralization was resulting in "aimless meanderings."³³

The government's policy of community schools received mixed reactions. Both Winnipeg dailies were firmly in favour of schools being used for community purposes and supported joint-use agreements between school divisions and municipal governments which provided increased facilities to both groups and avoided duplication in services. This support was, for the most part, given on the basis of financial considerations.³⁴ The press was also supportive of increased school board - citizen involvement. In 1973, for instance, the Tribune praised the Midland School Board for holding its meetings in rural schools to facilitate the attendance of parents to discuss issues such as local school closings.³⁵ On the other hand, the press was not in favour of those aspects of the government's policy which sought to extend the control of the day-to-day operations of the school to parent or community groups. In 1970, when the NDP government first

³¹ Winnipeg Free Press, 9 April 1974.

³² Winnipeg Tribune, 8 September 1973.

³³ Idem, 18 April 1973; Idem, 26 October 1974; Idem, 8 July 1975.

³⁴ Idem, 14 July 1973; Winnipeg Free Press, 5 February 1974.

³⁵ Winnipeg Tribune, 21 April 1973.

considered the formation of school advisory councils composed of teachers, parents and students, the Tribune argued that the absence of principals and division administrators could lead to a drop in "proper standards."³⁶ Five years later, when the newly appointed "progressive" superintendent of Winnipeg S.D., Howard Loewen, sought to expand the power of parents and students in curricular decision-making, the Tribune questioned the qualifications these groups had for the task.³⁷

The government's REAP program in rural divisions was also denounced by the press despite the fact that Winnipeg's dailies both opposed the unnecessary closure of small schools.³⁸ REAP was criticized for a number of reasons. It was operated by the "suspicious" Planning and Research Branch. It was accused of being a "patchwork job." And, it represented the government's Stay Option which placed rural school boards under the pressure of interest groups who often wanted to maintain small schools in opposition to board plans. The overruling of local board decisions by Hanuschak in a number of small school disputes, such as in Ninette and Camperville, was judged by one editor as "interference" with local self-government.³⁹

The NDP government's policy of experimentation was welcomed at the outset by the press on the basis of the government's claim to be searching for means to control rising education costs.⁴⁰ By 1973,

³⁶ Idem, 14 November 1970.

³⁷ Idem, 20 May 1975.

³⁸ Idem, 2 October 1972.

³⁹ Winnipeg Free Press, 16 February; Idem, 23 July 1974.

⁴⁰ Winnipeg Tribune, 13 March 1973.

however, there were increasing signs of disapproval regarding the Planning and Research Branch and the presence of "good NDPers" in the Department of Education.⁴¹ In 1974, the Department was described by the Free Press as a "subject of concern" for advocating innovations which had been abandoned elsewhere.⁴² According to the editor, the Department was "bent on a course of permissiveness regardless of opinions to the contrary."⁴³ The progressive philosophy of education became the subject of editorial ridicule for allegedly turning students into "guinea pigs" who left high school "functionally illiterate."⁴⁴ By 1973, after making Orlikow notorious, the press relished printing reports about discontent in the Department of Education and the school system. This prompted various anonymous Department and school division officials to describe the Department of Education as a "laughing stock" and as an "expensive circus." The Planning and Research Branch was described as a "receptacle for people who have been bounced out of other jobs"; and doing "little planning, [and] less research " despite its large staff and extravagant expenditures such as flying an entire junior high school staff from Winnipeg to Denver, Colorado for a half-day in-service.⁴⁵

The government's equalization policy drew press reactions primarily on the student aid program and the nutrition program.

41 Winnipeg Free Press, 13 April 1973.

42 Idem, 14 November 1974.

43 Idem, 23 November 1974.

44 Idem, 25 June 1975.

45 Winnipeg Tribune, 12 September 1975.

The reactions in both cases were very similar to those of the Conservatives in the legislature. The government's efforts to increase the financial assistance given to low-income students were opposed by Winnipeg's dailies. It was the firm belief of the press that a university education was not universally appropriate as proven⁴⁶ by the fact that many university graduates were incompetent.

The government, according to the Free Press, was attempting to use universities as a "social equalizer" and, in so doing, was destroying their value.⁴⁷ To remedy this, students should be academically screened before university and those who did go should pay a higher percentage of the real costs of a university education since they benefitted most from that training. University or "deterrent fees" were seen by the press as a justifiable means for excluding other than the most serious students and for heightening student appreciation for higher education. The cost of a university education, it was argued, was not so high as to be inaccessible to anyone who truly wanted to attend.⁴⁸ This lack of support for the government's increased student aid initiatives developed into more strident criticism after 1974. It was contended, particularly by the Tribune, that the student aid program was being managed so loosely that many students, rightfully ineligible for any funds, were "ripping-off" the government and that the Schreyer administration was too "blase" [sic]

⁴⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 9 February 1971.

⁴⁷ Idem, 15 October 1975.

⁴⁸ Idem, 26 January 1970.

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 to care. Closer scrutiny of assistance applications and less reliance
 upon the inherent honesty of students and their parents were urged.⁵⁰
 The government's nutrition program was criticized on the grounds that
 it was inappropriate for schools to feed children since this was the
 proper responsibility of the home. The trend towards "welfare-
 state programs" was ill-advised, according to the press, and the
 government was urged to reconsider the financial costs and the need
 to narrow the social scope of school activities.⁵¹

During the period from 1969 to 1975, the NDP government's
 policy of extending minority language rights received the least
 attention from the press. In 1970 the Tribune gave modest editorial
 support to the passage of Bill 113 which restored French language
 rights.⁵² In 1972, the Free Press criticized educators and Natives
 for their "rhetoric" regarding the plight of the Indian culture.
 Various provincial and national NDP leaders were accused of hypocrisy
 for denouncing middle class values as irrelevant for Natives.
 According to the editor for the Free Press, encouraging special status
 or distinction for minority groups was divisive.⁵³

The hostility of the Free Press and the Tribune towards the
 government's educational policies can be viewed from two perspectives.

49
Winnipeg Tribune, 28 September 1974.

50
 Idem, 4 December 1974.

51
 Idem, 9 February 1975 ; Winnipeg Free Press, 13 March 1975.

52
Winnipeg Tribune, 16 September 1970.

53
Winnipeg Free Press, 21 September 1972.

Neither newspaper could be described as an ideological supporter of the New Democratic Party since both dailies had long historical associations with Manitoba's older, well established Conservative and Liberal parties. Hence, sensing that education was a vulnerable political area to the NDP, the press exploited what it considered to be a weakness. A less cynical explanation, on the other hand, would be that both papers were genuinely disillusioned with the direction of education under the Schreyer administration and that the educational difficulties emerging in the 1970s were considered the result of NDP policies. It is likely that both of these explanations have some validity. The differences in the intensity of criticism between the Free Press and the Tribune towards the NDP can be ascribed to the difference in clientele that subscribed to the two competing dailies. The Free Press, with its larger circulation, has traditionally been the newspaper of the lower classes and its general distrust for innovation and progressive thinking reflected that of its readers. The Tribune, meanwhile, has traditionally been the newspaper of the upper classes and its openness to change and new ideas reflected that of its subscribers. In any case, the views of the Free Press and the Tribune, while sometimes differing in intensity, seldom differed in position. In this respect, from 1969-75 the press was an opinion leader which influenced the public's attitude and perception of issues. At the same time, however, both dailies to some degree merely mirrored public opinion.

CHAPTER XIII

PUBLIC REACTION

The reactions of Manitoba's general public to the educational policies of the NDP government during the period from 1969 to 1975 are best described as mixed. While some policies were accepted more readily than others, as time went on public sentiment shifted from cautious interest to mounting disapproval.

When the NDP was elected in 1969 Manitoba was entering a climate of social change, optimism and expectation which was accompanied by a mood of educational reform heightened by a new awareness of the youth movement. During the new government's first term in office, Manitoba witnessed "love-ins," "rock festivals," "drop-in centres," "hippies," the "drug culture" and student demonstrations. "Revolts" by high school students took place in a number of school divisions as students expressed a "demand" for school reforms. In 1970, for example, students in Dakota Collegiate in St. Vital S.D. demanded relief from "pettiness and little rules" to improve the "detention home" atmosphere of their school.¹ On another occasion, students from Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, a Winnipeg S.D. high school with an established reputation for traditionalism, were escorted to the police station after creating a disturbance with their protests at a school board meeting.² In 1971

¹
Winnipeg Free Press, 1 April 1970.

²
Idem, 7 October 1970.

a "Students' Bill of Rights" calling for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of dress, and freedom from disciplinary action to make schools a "happier place," was presented by a group of Winnipeg³ high school student council presidents to the Department of Education. During the same year, students at West Kildonan Collegiate in Seven Oaks S.D. boycotted classes and marched to the school board office⁴ to make similar demands. In 1972, with the financial support of the Department of Education, a Manitoba Association of Student Councils was formed. By the following year, the Association was demanding rights⁵ such as access to school board and school staff meetings. During 1974 students in Kelvin and Tec Voc, two Winnipeg S.D. high schools, lobbied for privileges ranging from smoking lounges to hall-way benches; and increased rights ranging from voluntary attendance to "democratic"⁶ governance of their school.

Also contributing to the mood of educational reform which existed with considerable intensity from 1969 to 1973, was the procession of educators and other professionals, often American, who exhorted teachers, administrators, and parents to embrace progressivism in education. Speaking at conferences sponsored by such bodies as the MTS, MAST, MASS (Manitoba Association of School Superintendents),

³ Winnipeg Tribune, 19 March 1971.

⁴ Idem, 25 October 1971.

⁵ Idem, 16 November 1972; Winnipeg Free Press, 17 September 1973.

⁶ Winnipeg Tribune, 6 March 1974; Idem, 8 May 1974.

MACLD (Manitoba Association of Children with Learning Disabilities), and the Department of Education, progressives promoted their views even during 1974 and 1975 when their philosophy's popularity seemed to be declining. Their criticism of the educational system was at times vehement. Audiences were told that schools produced "mindless cogs" to fit the "industrial machine"; that their discipline promoted a "slave mentality"; that they produced "human computers" rather than people like "Christ and Martin Luther King"; and that competition⁷ in schools produced emotionally disturbed children. To ameliorate this situation, they urged reforms ranging from the abolition of marks and grades, and the fostering of cooperation and humanism through greater individual freedoms, to the adoption of "Zen" learning methods⁸ for students, and "encounter group" therapy for teachers.

Adding to the voices of individual spokesmen for progressivism were respected bodies such as the Canadian Council of Teachers of English, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and the Canadian Education Association. In 1970, for instance, the Canadian Council of Teachers of English advocated greater "free interaction and expression among children" in the teaching of English.⁹ In 1973, the general secretary

⁷
Winnipeg Free Press, 27 May 1970; Idem, 26 March 1971; Winnipeg Tribune, 18 October 1972; Winnipeg Free Press, 15 October 1970.

⁸
Winnipeg Free Press, 3 January 1974; Idem, 22 January 1974; Winnipeg Tribune, 22 February 1973; Idem, 20 February 1971.

⁹
Winnipeg Tribune, 21 August 1970.

of the Canadian Teachers' Federation told MTS delegates that the traditional goals of education --economic reward and academic standards, had little significance in today's society and urged therefore the adoption of a more "human and child centered" philosophy.¹⁰ Later that year, the Canadian Education Association reported that open area classrooms were superior to traditional classrooms because they encouraged healthy "interpersonal" relationships, self-discipline and independence.¹¹ The Association also claimed that its recent nationwide survey indicated that a majority of Canadians supported a more "permissive open style of education but want more of a say in deciding school policy."¹²

Belief in the need to reform schools was not restricted to students and educators alone. Under the writing influence of American author Alvin Toffler, whose book Future Shock became a best seller in 1970, the six hundred persons who attended Winnipeg's "Milieu 70" symposium readily embraced the need to prevent modern technology from "robbing society of its humanity" and advocated the realignment of the school system to reflect greater humanism.¹³

Within this climate of reform in the early 1970s which was advanced by the NDP government, school divisions responded to various

¹⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, 27 March 1973.

¹¹ Winnipeg Tribune, 17 August 1973; Winnipeg Free Press, 27 September 1973.

¹² Winnipeg Free Press, 28 September 1973.

¹³ Idem, 27 October 1970.

degrees. Urban and Northern school divisions were the most receptive to change while rural divisions reflected a greater conservatism. This was due not only to reasons of individual school division wealth and accessibility to additional provincial funds, but to regional temperament as well. Student rights and privileges were extended by a number of divisions. As early as 1972 Selkirk S.D. established a smoking lounge in one of its high schools which also permitted fifteen minute student "coffee breaks" between classes and sitting in the halls.¹⁴ In Seven Oaks S.D. high school students, much like university students, conducted course evaluations at the end of the 1973-74 school year.¹⁵ Also in 1973, the Winnipeg School Board, with the approval of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers, the Winnipeg Child Guidance Clinic and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, censured strapping.¹⁶ Similarly, in River East S.D. trustees criticized "antiquated" punishments such as "detention" and the "writing of lines" which allegedly killed a child's "love of learning."¹⁷

Numerous school divisions took steps to provide parents, teachers and students a greater voice in educational matters. In South-Eastern Manitoba's Seine River School Division, for example, a "Student Advisory Group" was formed in 1971 to advise the superintendent

¹⁴
Winnipeg Tribune, 13 December 1972.

¹⁵
Idem, 9 April 1974.

¹⁶
Idem, 6 June 1973.

¹⁷
Winnipeg Free Press, 27 September 1973.

of student sentiments.¹⁸ In 1972, River East S.D. added four citizens¹⁹ to its school board to serve in advisory capacities. In 1973, Winnipeg S.D. adopted a community involvement policy for any future school construction or renovation.²⁰ In 1974, following a similar action by Winnipeg S.D., the neighbouring St. Boniface School Division adopted an open boundary policy whereby parents could enrol their children in any school regardless of the location of their home. To assist parents in this selection, the Division produced a handbook²¹ which outlined the features of each school.

Many school divisions also attempted innovative programs to improve and humanize education. Impressed by what they had seen in the United States, Seven Oaks S.D. officials in 1973 experimented with alternative programs.²² Similarly, Winnipeg S.D. operated a "positive reinforcement" program wherein junior high students from one core area school were given soft drinks, posters, and trips to a swimming pool for their improved attendance and behaviour.²³ Rolling River S.D., meanwhile, experimented with a "contract grades" system: high school students signed a "contract" to produce an agreed amount of work for an agreed mark.²⁴ In Transcona-Springfield S.D. a new

¹⁸ Winnipeg Tribune, 30 November 1971.

¹⁹ Idem, 8 October 1972.

²⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, 14 February 1973.

²¹ Winnipeg Tribune, 14 September 1972; Idem, 9 April 1975.

²² Idem, 30 October 1971.

²³ Idem, 22 November 1972.

²⁴ Winnipeg Free Press, 25 April 1970.

agriculture course at Springfield Collegiate included experiences
 such as the harvesting of crops.²⁵

To further meet local needs, some divisions sought to decentralize their administrative structures. Winnipeg S.D., for example, distributed administrative responsibility by increasing the number of its senior officials while at the same time granting increased power over school budgets and staff hiring to principals.²⁶

In tune with the popular mood of reform which existed among the many groups involved in education, school division administrators were often at the forefront of those enthusiastically promoting progressivism. During the period 1969-73 it was not uncommon for administrators, such as the superintendent of one Northern division, to suggest that because teachers no longer knew what should or should not be taught, schools should become "humanistic" and "child-centred"; should be more accepting of individual differences to foster a "joy of learning"; and should embody "democracy in action."²⁷

In response to this reformist mood, public reaction to NDP educational policies was ambivalent. Those policies which encouraged significant changes in the nature of the schooling process encountered public distrust. During the government's first term in office, its community schools, equalization and minority language rights policies enjoyed some support. The promotion of citizen involvement in schools was

²⁵
Winnipeg Tribune, 18 September 1973.

²⁶
 Idem, 7 March 1973.

²⁷
 Idem, 31 October 1972.

28

generally welcomed by parents many of whom acted as volunteer aides. Some viewed this as an opportunity to increase their influence over their children's education. Others viewed this as an opportunity to increase the accountability of the school. Support for the community schools policy also came from the Metro Winnipeg Recreation Directors' Association which favoured closer community-school arrangements; the Manitoba Home and School Parent-Teacher Federation which supported school advisory committees; and the National Council of Jewish Women which promoted the use of school volunteers.

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The government's policy of equalization was favourably received by Native peoples and various public groups. During 1969-73 Native groups such as the Manitoba Indian and Metis Federation, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood and the Association of Indian Metis Educators were critical of the school system which they claimed was "assimilative" and "insensitive" to cultural differences such that Native children were given a "raw deal."³⁰ They demanded Native curriculum, more Native teachers and teacher aides, and a greater influence over the educational services provided. These demands were supported at various times by such groups as the WTA, MTS, YMCA, YWCA, National Council of Jewish Women and the Anglican Church of Thompson.³¹

The government's policy of extending minority language rights was well received by the ethnic minorities affected. The passage of

28

Winnipeg Free Press, 7 May 1973; Idem, 19 September 1973.

29

Winnipeg Tribune, 26 March 1970; Idem, 31 March 1972; Idem, 18 March 1972.

30

Winnipeg Free Press, 19 June 1970; Winnipeg Tribune, 24 August 1970.

31

Winnipeg Tribune, 17 December 1969; Winnipeg Free Press, 30 March 1971.

Bill 113 in 1970 drew praise from the Ukrainian Canadian Committee which favoured the availability of Ukrainian language instruction as early as grade one.³² Support for the government's initiative was also expressed at the Manitoba Mosaic Congress in 1970 where the delegates, representing numerous minorities, supported the suggestion made by Winnipeg's Jewish community that the government further promote minority languages within educational, governmental and community activities. Delegates at the Congress spoke in opposition to the "melting pot" theory which advanced assimilation rather than the preservation of ethnicity.³³ The French community, for its part, benefitted most from Bill 113 and was eager to see the legislation implemented. To speed its implementation, the Franco-Manitoban Society applied considerable pressure on the Schreyer administration with briefs and even a protest march in 1971.³⁴ Meanwhile, school boards in communities with sizeable French populations came under pressure from rival parent groups disputing the type of French program to be implemented in various schools. Intense disagreements regarding the amount of French to be taught took place in school divisions such as St. Boniface, St. Vital and Seine River.³⁵ The opposing factions were often not composed of French versus non-French parents. Many

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Winnipeg Tribune, 23 July 1970.

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Idem, 19 October 1970; Winnipeg Free Press, 15 October 1970.

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Winnipeg Tribune, 3 February 1971; Idem, 2 April 1971.

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Winnipeg Free Press, 18 December 1970; Idem, 1 February 1971;
Winnipeg Tribune, 6 May 1971.

French parents opposed the establishment of all-French schools favouring instead, the extension of French under the immersion program.

Although the government's policies of decentralization, democratization and experimentation found support among some quarters, during 1969-73 the general public by and large maintained traditionalist views regarding the central functions and operations of the school. Nonetheless, the mood towards educational reform did have manifestations. Some parents attempted to establish their own "free" schools. In 1971, for instance, a group of parents in St. Norbert in Seine River S.D. set up their own progressive elementary school staffed by a salaried teacher in the morning and themselves in the afternoon.³⁶ During the same year, a group of sixty parents approached the Winnipeg School Board for funds to operate their own "community school."³⁷ The civic elections of 1971 also reflected the interest of some members of the public in school reform. Prior to the elections, a "Coalition for Better Schools" citizens' group was formed in Winnipeg. This group sought to influence the election results by endorsing progressive school trustee candidates or fielding some of their own.³⁸ As well, many school board candidates, sensing voter interest, espoused progressive beliefs and support for such things as the Interim Core Report,

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Winnipeg Free Press, 7 February 1975.

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Winnipeg Tribune, 3 February 1971.

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Winnipeg Free Press, 30 August 1971.

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greater community involvement and experimentation.

Yet, the educational philosophy advanced by the government and popular with many educators, was not as well regarded by the general public. The Core Committee's Interim Report, generally praised by teachers and school officials, received less enthusiasm from such bodies as the Thompson Chamber of Commerce which foresaw future problems for employers if Core proposals were to be enacted.⁴⁰ A Free Press public opinion poll in 1971 concluded that most Manitobans felt that education costs were high primarily because of an over-abundance of "frills" in school.⁴¹ Also in 1971, while the secretary of the Core Committee stated that public response reflected "almost complete agreement with the general philosophy behind their report,"⁴² a later government survey of those parents, teachers and students who attended the Committee hearings, in fact indicated that public reaction was admittedly "far from enthusiastic." According to the survey all three groups rejected increasing parental and student decision-making; students progressing at their own speed in school; and the educational goals recommended by the Committee -- communication skills, creativity, scientific thinking, skill development, and personal and social development. The students surveyed also rejected the premise that

³⁹ Winnipeg Tribune, 2 October 1971.

⁴⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, 22 February 1971.

⁴¹ Idem, 20 March 1971.

⁴² Winnipeg Tribune, 15 April 1971.

their "interests and needs" were more important than the mastery of
⁴³ subjects in school. In 1972 a similar survey conducted by the
 St. Vital School Board likewise revealed a basic conservatism among
 members of the public towards education. Although the survey reported
 an aggregate majority of respondents favouring the extension of
 student decision-making in curricular matters, parents and teachers
 were displeased with the lack of discipline in schools, approved of
 strapping students, and were both evenly divided as to the need to
 reintroduce provincial examinations. Not surprisingly, students
⁴⁴ strongly opposed strapping and provincial examinations. A 1973
 poll conducted by Norwood School Division of a number of Winnipeg
 businesses revealed that businessmen were generally dissatisfied with
 high school graduates. They were specifically concerned about the
 quality of student communication skills and the erosion of the grading
 system which assisted businessmen in comparing prospective employees.
⁴⁵ This concern for the maintenance of a comparative grading system
 extended also to Manitoba's universities who, in 1973, complained about
 the difficulty of administering proper admission procedures given the
⁴⁶ diversity in student evaluation methods used by high schools.

Specific incidents also suggest that the public was skeptical

⁴³ Winnipeg Free Press, 21 June 1971.

⁴⁴ Idem, 15 September 1972; Winnipeg Tribune, 18 September 1972.

⁴⁵ Winnipeg Free Press, 20 June 1973.

⁴⁶ Winnipeg Tribune, 22 May 1973.

of progressive education. In 1972, angry parents confronted the Assiniboine-South School Board with charges that a serious "gulf" existed in the schools. Parents were upset that children in the elementary grades were exposed to open area and continuous progress which contrasted sharply with structured secondary schooling where basic skills such as reading with comprehension and essay writing ability were needed. One parent protested that his children had been, in effect, involuntary subjects in educational "experiments."

Parents also registered their disapproval of current academic standards and criticized the Division's attendance policy which allowed high school students to miss up to 12 percent of their classes with impunity.⁴⁷

Also, in 1972, 350 parents in Transcona-Springfield S.D. protested their school board's decision to rotate its principals. Parents feared that this change might lead to the lowering of school discipline resulting in the schools being turned into a "zoo" as some Winnipeg schools supposedly had been.⁴⁸ In 1973, a group of Winnipeg parents, dissatisfied with the academic and moral standards of the public schools, established their own Manitoba Christian School. Due to the unexpected enrolment response, the school included kindergarten to grade twelve rather than only kindergarten to grade nine as planned.⁴⁹

During the period 1969-73, the sentiments of the general public,

⁴⁷ Winnipeg Free Press, 27 February 1972.

⁴⁸ Idem, 12 May 1972 ; Winnipeg Tribune, 13 May 1972.

⁴⁹ Winnipeg Free Press, 14 August 1973; Idem, 11 November 1973.

including educators and free lance writers, as represented by feature articles and letters to the editor in Winnipeg's two daily newspapers, were fairly equally divided in support or opposition to the government's policies. Feature articles tended to be supportive, while letters to the editor usually expressed grievances. One mother, for example, criticized the teaching methods used to instruct reading in Manitoba after discovering that her daughter, now enrolled in grade two in Alberta, could not identify the letters of the alphabet.⁵⁰ Another parent wrote that the Winnipeg School Board's decision to censure strapping was "hogwash" because strapping did prevent discipline problems.⁵¹

During 1974 and 1975 the Schreyer government's educational policies continued to evoke mixed reactions among the public. While the policies of community schools, equalization, and minority languages continued to receive moderate support or tacit acceptance, the policies of decentralization, democratization, and experimentation became increasingly controversial. As during the government's first term in office, the ideas of increased parental involvement in schools and local control were popular among the electorate and adopted by numerous trustee candidates in the 1974 Manitoba civic elections.⁵² As well, some school boards, such as the River East and St. Vital boards,

⁵⁰ Winnipeg Tribune, 19 November 1971.

⁵¹ Idem, 5 September 1973.

⁵² Idem, 10 October 1974; Winnipeg Free Press, 17 October 1974.

continued to add non-voting citizen members to extend community
⁵³
 "input."

The government's equalization policy received moderate public support. Equality of opportunity was a favorite slogan among many 1974 school board candidates.⁵⁴ As well, during 1974-75 the topic of "junk foods" became a popular issue and the introduction of the government's nutrition program in 1975 was lauded by such bodies as the Winnipeg Council of Self-Help Inc. and local parents groups in affected inner-city schools.⁵⁵ On the other hand, however, opposition to the nutrition program also existed as typified by a published letter to the Free Press which argued that it was the responsibility of parents to feed their children and that such programs would foster social dependency rather than self-reliance.⁵⁶

The government's minority languages policy continued to be both popular and divisive during the 1974-75 period. Bill 36 legislating the use of transitional languages, for instance, was well received by the Manitoba Metis Federation.⁵⁷ Many all-French schools were established in school divisions with significant French populations such as St. Boniface, St. Vital, and Norwood school divisions. In other urban divisions, such as Winnipeg S.D. and St. James-Assiniboia,

⁵³ Winnipeg Tribune, 8 August 1974; Winnipeg Free Press, 24 February 1975.

⁵⁴ Winnipeg Tribune, 10 October 1974; Winnipeg Free Press, 17 October 1974.

⁵⁵ Winnipeg Tribune, 30 October 1974; *Idem*, 3 April 1975.

⁵⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 22 March 1975.

⁵⁷ Winnipeg Tribune, 1 July 1974.

minority language instruction was extended to more grades and French immersion schools became exceedingly popular.⁵⁸ However, the move by some rural divisions to increase the amount of French taught in certain schools resulted in heated community disputes. In Seine River S.D. one parent faction which opposed the construction of an all-French school accused the Department's Bureau De L'Education Française of being manipulated by the Franco-Manitoban Society and of fostering "separatist" actions.⁵⁹ Also, some parents attempted to transfer their land registration to a neighbouring division in order to enroll their children in schools offering less French.⁶⁰

Similar to the period 1969-73, the government's policies of decentralization, democratization and experimentation were poorly received by the general public during the following two years. The mood for educational reform dissipated as public disenchantment increased during 1974-75. Private schools, such as St. John's Ravenscourt in Winnipeg, were "swamped" with enrolment applications and the use of private tutors reportedly increased.⁶¹ The government's 1974 two-tier grading system proposal met rigorous criticism from university officials. Such a system, it was pointed out, would create havoc with faculty admission policies, with bursary and scholarship selection, and with transfers to out of province universities.⁶²

58
Idem, 26 July 1974.

59
Idem, 6 May 1975.

60
Idem, 12 September 1974; Idem, 24 September 1975; Winnipeg Free Press, 10 September 1974.

61
Winnipeg Tribune, 7 March 1974; Idem, 30 March 1974.

62
Winnipeg Free Press, 11 September 1974.

Academic standards were an issue with some school board candidates in
the civic elections.⁶³ The once reformist Manitoba Association of
Student Councils in 1974 advocated a return to Departmental examinations,
compulsory subjects, standardization; and "more rules to make sure we
get education" [sic].⁶⁴ In the same year, a group of sixty parents
from an open area elementary school in St. James-Assiniboia S.D.,
concerned about reading and mathematics instruction, petitioned their
trustees to conduct a basic skills test of their children for com-
parison with a traditional school in the vicinity.⁶⁵ Shortly there-
after, the trustees reassessed the Division's educational philosophy
after concluding that elementary students were receiving inadequate
grammar instruction.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, delegates at a Community College
and Manitoba Industries conference decried the level of communication
skills exhibited by high school graduates.⁶⁷ The Manitoba Association
of Professional Engineers made public its concern about high school
standards and the implications for university standards.⁶⁸ A Winnipeg
Chamber of Commerce survey indicated that a significant number of city
businessmen felt that schools were not adequately stressing the three

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Idem, 11 October 1974; Idem, 22 October 1974.

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Feeling somewhat betrayed by this unexpected stance adopted by the
government funded Association, Orlikow commented that this "unenlightened"
position was one which could only originate from "products of the system."
Winnipeg Tribune, 18 November 1974; Idem, 23 November 1974.

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Winnipeg Tribune, 13 November 1974.

66

Winnipeg Free Press, 11 December 1974.

67

Idem, 20 November 1974.

68

Winnipeg Tribune, 6 December 1974.

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Rs. The year 1974 also witnessed the resigning of more than 1900 teachers, a number which surpassed the record-breaking figure of the year before which the press had attributed to an unsatisfactory state of affairs in the schools.⁷⁰

During 1975 the controversy intensified and events exemplifying public disenchantment with major aspects of the NDP's policies continued. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, claiming that student abilities in English were "eroding rapidly," urged the government to review school curriculum and introduce a new course called "Applied English."⁷¹ At a public meeting in River Heights, one of Winnipeg's traditionally upper class areas, angry parents protested the government's decision to adopt a shortened school day and the lack of curricular uniformity from one school to another.⁷² Dissatisfied with the public school system entirely, a group of parents formed the "Renaissance Manitoba" organization to establish private schools which stressed high academic and moral standards.⁷³ Also in 1975, the MTS reported the results of a random survey held among Winnipeg parents. The survey revealed that although a majority of parents indicated an over-all satisfaction with their children's schooling, 67 percent stated that school discipline was too lax; 62 percent stated that a school's primary purpose was to

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Idem, 13 December 1974.

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Winnipeg Free Press, 14 January 1975; Winnipeg Tribune, 22 September 1973.

71

Winnipeg Tribune, 28 February 1975.

72

Winnipeg Free Press, 26 March 1975; Winnipeg Tribune, 26 March 1975.

73

Winnipeg Tribune, 15 November 1975.

provide sound academic education; 50 percent stated that there existed too much student freedom regarding curriculum; and only 46 percent expected schools to deal with "socialization" or non-academic matters. The parents of high school students, people with a university education, professionals and executives, the semi-skilled, and women over fifty were less satisfied with schools than other respondents. These groups were especially aware that the "Future-Shock predicted days of nonwork are not yet here." Few respondents, regardless of category, expected schools to develop the "whole child."⁷⁴ A government task force investigating Physical Education in Manitoba was informed by most parents that additional Physical Education was desirable, but not at the expense of academic subjects.⁷⁵ The Winnipeg School Board was petitioned to abandon its plans of building a new open area school and to build a traditional school instead.⁷⁶

During the period 1974-75, the number of educators and school officials who criticized the government's educational policies increased significantly in contrast to the period 1969-73. Many of these critics did so as individual citizens in the form of newspaper articles. One retiring principal asserted that "you can't train a student for a structured society in an unstructured classroom."⁷⁷ A

⁷⁴ Winnipeg Free Press, 29 January 1975.

⁷⁵ Winnipeg Tribune, 7 June 1975.

⁷⁶ Idem, 23 July 1975.

⁷⁷ Winnipeg Free Press, 21 January 1974.

retiring teacher, who in 1974 had taught for forty-three years in Winnipeg S.D., stated that students enjoyed school more in the past than under the present permissive system.⁷⁸ University professors (seldom from the Faculty of Education), also criticized the public school system. One professor maintained that educational standards had been dropping since about 1968 when the educational philosophy changed and that there now existed a high number of university students who "can't construct a basic sentence" and who "haven't a clue about everyday mathematical computation." Furthermore, he claimed that while many educators spoke ill of the effects of technology such as pollution and dehumanization students were being left in no position to correct this since they failed to understand science.⁷⁹

The Core Report drew sharp criticism from many educators. One rural principal argued that the implementation of the Core proposals would result in the "trivialization" of education. He claimed that under the proposed system students would be allowed to take the path of least resistance. Making school a "fun place" was a disservice to students because the unmotivated, who chose not to become well educated, would one day become the "helpless prey" of those who

⁷⁸
Idem, 17 June 1974.

⁷⁹
Idem, 20 February 1974.

had the desire and ability to manipulate society for their own profit.⁸⁰
 One teacher described the Report as "faddish," "fanciful," "naive
 claptrap" and a source of low teacher morale.⁸¹ Another teacher who
 complained about being sworn at, jeered, baited, and struck by
 students when acting as their substitute teacher, questioned the
 wisdom of spending tax money on schools which produced such poor
 results.⁸² Meanwhile, the superintendent of St. Boniface S.D. informed
 the delegates at the 1974 Canadian Educational Conference that the
 "3R's" were being neglected in schools.⁸³ The Headmaster of St. John's
 Ravenscourt reiterated claims that low standards in the public schools
 deprived intelligent students of a challenging education. He
 suggested that because the public school system was guided by a "soft"
 philosophy, students were granted inappropriate "rights" such as the
 right to be promoted undeservedly.⁸⁴ The appointment of Orlikow to
 the position of deputy minister in 1975 evoked apprehension among many
 school division officials and educators. One unidentified official
 informed the press that "Planning and research [sic] has been
 brilliantly and notoriously unsuccessful in everything it tried to do."⁸⁵

A series of articles by Winnipeg high school teacher

⁸⁰
 Idem, 20 February 1974.

⁸¹
Winnipeg Tribune, 20 July 1974.

⁸²
 Idem, 19 April 1974.

⁸³
Winnipeg Free Press, 26 September 1974.

⁸⁴
 Idem, 10 June 1975.

⁸⁵
Winnipeg Tribune, 13 August 1975.

W.A. Milton were particularly critical of the policies promoted by the NDP government:

Never before have so many parents, teachers, professors, and employers criticized Manitoba's school system so severely -- with so much justification -- for failing in its traditional priority.

The goal of schooling, argued Milton,

is drifting, little by little from what is possible -- broad literacy -- toward the silly, the impossible and even the grandiose... to what naive reformers like to call personality development...full human potential.⁸⁶

The result of this drift was the creation of an "unhealthy atmosphere" in many schools. Teachers were now often treated with "open scorn" and were obliged to "turn a blind eye" to unruly students who could swear loudly, kick lockers and "neck" with impunity since school administrators frowned upon punishing students. As well as poor discipline, stated Milton, the drift in education was reinforcing student apathy, truancy and indignation towards school work. Partly to blame for these results was the damaging lack of uniformity regarding subject approach and student evaluation. While one teacher may have based his course on "relevant" materials, "rapping" sessions, "nature studies" on the school lawn and "sensitivity training," a colleague in the same school may have been trying to teach the same course in the traditional fashion. The subsequent differences in course work and student evaluation fostered cynicism among both teachers and students.⁸⁷ According to

⁸⁶
Winnipeg Free Press, 15 June 1974.

⁸⁷
Winnipeg Tribune, 20 July 1974.

Milton, the demand for "personal relevance" in education, typified by students pressuring teachers to allow them to produce "projects" on topics of their choice rather than following the curriculum, was ill-advised since students could cheat themselves of a broad education.⁸⁸ Similarly unacceptable was that aspect of the community schools concept which would make a lay person, such as a tradesman, responsible for evaluating tasks performed by students. This, Milton suggested, was a step in the removal of accountability from the learning process since volunteers, unlike teachers, could not be held accountable.⁸⁹ Milton also suggested that the "drift" in education was responsible for the drop in educational standards and noted that, from 1970 to 1974, high school failure rates conspicuously decreased from 30 percent to 5 percent. One main reason for this was that marking standards had become so divergent among schools and teachers, that evaluation had degenerated to "guesswork." In the past, standards were safeguarded by a hierarchy of learning with clear objectives tested at each level. Even the intangible aspects of learning flourished. Competition and anxiety, present in all facets of life, were not unique to provincial examinations which served to maintain minimal standards. According to Milton, the protests of those who claimed that examinations were "cruel," were naive.⁹⁰

88
Idem, 12 October 1974.

89
Idem, 22 March 1975.

90
Idem, 9 November 1974.

Critical statements regarding the government's policies originated not only from individuals directly involved in education, but also from parents and citizens at large. One mother wrote a feature article urging a return to "basics" in education. She criticized the grade promotion of children who had not mastered their work. This practice, she argued, was not a "kindness" because the child's problems would only multiply as years progressed. She asserted that students needed nudging and that allowing them to work at their own speed was a disservice. As well, she criticized the attempt by some teachers to be "cool" and "with it" with their students and questioned the wisdom of continuing with open area teaching when this was being abandoned in the United States.⁹¹ Another mother criticized the Core proposals as a "hit or miss" approach based on "errors in philosophy and psychology." Under the proposed system, she contended, students would be provided with "overchoice,"⁹² including the choice of not choosing. Moreover, it was not the proper role of schools to attempt to make children "happy, whole and free" since teachers were incapable of replacing the family institution. The current overemphasis of play in schools was ill-advised because it was extraneous to the central goals of education and provided no relief to non-school activities. As well, this critic suggested that some-

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Idem, 30 March 1974.

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Winnipeg Free Press, 20 April 1974.

thing was amiss in the schools since "insolent, destructive" students⁹³ were becoming more common. One anonymous letter to the editor defended traditional education as imperfect but nonetheless effective in teaching the basics and instilling the realistic notion that goals in life required hard work and discipline. According to the author, the "requirements of life have not changed" and students would indeed face "Future Shock" when graduating from a permissive school. Educators, "sadly lacking in common sense," had lost sight of the true purpose of schools and were failing to prepare students for the next century.⁹⁴ Another letter to the editor indicated shock at the government's two-tier proposal. The author sarcastically suggested that the government should proceed one step further by abolishing schools and simply distributing high school certificates to all. Selection, according to this critic, was inevitable in society due to individual differences and to deny this was foolish.⁹⁵ Similarly, Orlikow's suggestion in 1974 that courses such as basketweaving should be acceptable in the Revised High School Program drew a number of cynical letters to the editor.⁹⁶ Experimentation with a shortened school day for elementary schools was also questioned. Given the amount of time devoted to non-instructional activities such as recess,

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Idem, 25 May 1974.

94

Idem, 25 May 1975.

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Idem, 21 September 1974.

96

Idem, 27 November 1974; Idem, 30 November 1974.

clean-up and administration, some parents reasoned that the school
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 day was already short enough.

During the NDP government's first five and one-half years in office the reactions of the general public, much like those of the opposition in the legislature, the MTS and MAST, and the press, became increasingly unfavourable towards the educational policies promoted. Whereas in 1969 there existed a mood of reform, in 1975 there existed a mood of debate and controversy. No doubt the reactions of the opposition parties, the MTS and MAST, and the Winnipeg dailies influenced Manitobans in their perception of the schools. Yet, there is reason to believe that public disenchantment, especially among parents and even pupils themselves, mainly originated independently of these influences. After an initial period of enthusiasm for change, the public's affinity for traditionalism in education reaffirmed itself and an atmosphere of disillusionment replaced the excitement of the late sixties and early seventies. The change was partly as a result of concern over rising costs, but much more so a disappointment that education failed to live up to the extravagant promises made
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 for it.

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Idem, 16 February 1974.

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See also J. Donald Wilson, "From the Swinging Sixties to the Sobering Seventies," in Precepts Policy and Process: Perspectives on Contemporary Canadian Education, eds. Hugh A. Stevenson and J. Donald Wilson (London, Ontario: Alexander, Blake Assoc., 1977), p. 33.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

As 1975 drew to a close the controversy involving the NDP government's educational policies continued. Despite special efforts by the Schreyer administration, criticism increased and did not abate until the government's defeat in the provincial election on 11 October 1977.

During 1976, partly due to Deputy Minister Orlikow's penchant for contentious public statements, the government came under severe attack. Suggesting that reading, writing and arithmetic were not as important as they used to be, Orlikow informed the Winnipeg School Board that the telephone and other electronic means had largely replaced writing; that television had to some extent, replaced the book; and that pocket calculators had diminished the need for mathematical skills. Educators, he maintained, should thus be more concerned with teaching students such skills as "conflict resolution," "group decision-making," and "how to watch television with a critical eye."¹ Within days both editorial and public sentiment made itself known on the pages of the Winnipeg Tribune and the Winnipeg Free Press as some subscribers demanded Orlikow's resignation.²

In the legislature, the Conservative party accused Hanuschak

¹ Winnipeg Tribune, 12 February 1976.

² Idem, 20 February 1976; Winnipeg Free Press, 28 February 1976.

of giving "one of the most stupid performances" by a minister ever seen in Manitoba and that the "heart of the problem" was his deputy minister who, opposition members claimed, was not averse to contradicting his superiors and to admitting that he had no idea where education was going.³ To emphasize their criticism, the Conservatives introduced a motion to reduce Hanuschak's cabinet salary from \$15,600 to \$2.50.⁴ The Liberal party, for its part, criticized the government for turning the province's school system into a "chaotic jungle" where real improvement lagged far behind excessive costs.⁵ Even the Manitoba Government Employees' Association made public its dissatisfaction with Orlikow and the Department of Education by asserting in 1976 that the Department was in a state of "utter chaos."⁶

In response, Premier Schreyer maintained that the uproar over the three Rs was only a "red herring."⁷ Deputy Minister Orlikow submitted to the Free Press on three occasions full page defences of his Department's programs and activities and wrote at least one letter to the editor in rebuttal to opposing letters.⁸ In September of 1976, a "politically-weakened" Hanuschak was replaced by Ian Turnbull, the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.⁹ Evidently sensing the need

³ Winnipeg Free Press, 30 April 1976.

⁴ Idem, 11 May 1976.

⁵ Idem, 10 March 1976.

⁶ Idem, 20 September 1976.

⁷ Idem, 9 July 1976; Winnipeg Tribune, 28 December 1976.

⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, 26 March 1976; Idem, 4 June 1976; Idem, 11 September 1976; Winnipeg Tribune, 27 September 1976.

⁹ Winnipeg Tribune, 22 September 1976.

to "defuse" education, Turnbull immediately "muzzled" his deputy minister and repeatedly affirmed the need for teaching the basics, providing Departmental direction, and fostering traditional academic excellence.¹⁰ In contrast with his predecessors, he also declared that practice and drill were sound teaching practices and even stated that in order to maintain discipline, in some instances, strapping¹¹ was acceptable.

Despite these efforts education remained a volatile topic. The Department of Education continued to be a hotbed of intrigue as Turnbull wrestled for control over his competing Deputy Minister Orlikow and Associate Deputy Minister Reeve Cramer. The lack of harmony among the three administrators enabled the official opposition to charge that there existed not one, but three Departments of Education.¹² Meanwhile, a team of psychologists working for the Child Development Clinic at Winnipeg's Health Sciences Centre made public a twelve-year study, involving nine hundred students, which concluded that open area classrooms were inferior to traditional classrooms in achieving educational goals. When publicizing this research, the psychologists informed the press that in 1973 the Planning and Research Branch had dismissed their work as not "pertinent" and that Orlikow was now reluctant to discuss their findings.¹³ Also entering the fray, Ralph Campbell, the new

¹⁰ Manitoba, Debates, McGill, 2 March 1977, p. 280; Winnipeg Tribune, 28 December 1976; Idem, 22 September 1976.

¹¹ Winnipeg Tribune, 23 December 1976; Winnipeg Free Press, 25 February 1977.

¹² Manitoba, Debates, McGill, 2 March 1977, p. 280.

¹³ Winnipeg Tribune, 13 August 1973; Winnipeg Free Press, 22 April 1976.

president of the University of Manitoba, stated his support for a compulsory non-credit writing course as a university graduating requirement to ensure that students could in fact read and write.¹⁴ The Manitoba Association of School Superintendents meanwhile urged the government to "tighten" curriculum requirements at all grade levels to avoid "gaps" in children's learning.¹⁵ The theme for the annual convention of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees in 1977 was "Basics" and the focal point of the convention was a spirited debate on that topic.¹⁶ Later that year, a school board poll of parents, students and teachers in the school division of St. Vital reiterated the public desire for the teaching of more "basics."¹⁷ Then, shortly prior to the 1977 provincial election, at a public town hall meeting in his constituency, Turnbull received "several broadsides" from students who asserted that schools had become a "joke."¹⁸

A few days later, on the eve of the election, Turnbull's announcement of his intention to introduce a completely new Public Schools Act was cynically received by the press, and in any event failed to prevent his personal defeat at the polls.¹⁹ As for the NDP government, it was defeated by the Conservative party which won thirty-three seats with 47 percent of the popular vote.²⁰ The

¹⁴ Winnipeg Tribune, 6 November 1976.

¹⁵ Idem, 13 December 1976.

¹⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 28 March 1977.

¹⁷ Idem, 30 August 1977.

¹⁸ Idem, 29 September 1977.

¹⁹ Idem, 8 October 1977; Idem, 12 October 1977.

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In the 1977 provincial election thirty-three Progressive Conservatives, twenty-three New Democrats and one Liberal were elected to Manitoba's legislature. Winnipeg Free Press, 12 October 1977.

educational issue could well have assisted the Conservative electoral victory.

Within days of the election, the new Conservative government led by Sterling Lyon dismissed Orlikow and began instituting changes which reflected a more traditional educational philosophy.²¹ In a speech to MAST the new Minister of Education, Keith Cosens, a former rural principal now representing the constituency of Gimli, stated that the "do your own thing" philosophy of permissiveness had come to an end and that Manitoba would be moving towards a more structured school curriculum with greater emphasis placed on maintaining standards. Under the previous government, he stated, schools had overreached themselves in attempting to be "all things to all people"; whereas his government would decide what schools should and could do, and then concentrate on doing those things well.²² Subsequently, the Department of Education was reorganized and various NDP programs were discontinued by the new government. In the 1978-79 provincial budget, for example, the Small Schools program was cut along with the Special Projects Branch.²³ In the following budget year, the Lyon administration dissolved the Vocational Education Branch, the field section of the Native Education Branch, and cancelled the Parent Council grants. The

²¹ Winnipeg Tribune, 22 October 1977.

²² Manitoba, News Service, 17 March 1978; Keith Cosens, Speech delivered to MAST, 17 March 1978. (Mimeographed.)

²³ Winnipeg Tribune, 30 March 1978.

once large and powerful Planning and Research Branch was formally disbanded and replaced by a small Research Branch designed to provide predominantly statistical information.²⁴ Also in 1979, the Conservative government began the random testing of kindergarten to grade twelve English language skills and indicated that this would, in the future, be expanded to other basic skills in an effort to provide teachers with guidelines to measure student abilities. To free teachers to "teach" and to eliminate duplication of efforts by school divisions, the new government thus promised to increase provincial testing, to regain control over curriculum development, and to re-employ "field services personnel." These field personnel, formerly known as school inspectors, were to interpret government policy to the schools and to report on what the schools were doing.²⁵ In terms of student aid, the Conservative government instituted tighter controls than did the previous administration. While tuition fees for universities were raised in 1978, the government levied heavier penalties against students who failed to repay their student loans, and increased from \$399 to \$699 the total loan figure students were required to accept before becoming eligible for bursaries. The result of these changes was a drop of 26 percent in aid applications by students attending Manitoba's universities.²⁶ In summation,

²⁴ Idem, 1 February 1979; Manitoba, Education Manitoba 5 (September 1978):8.

²⁵ Winnipeg Tribune, 9 March 1979; Idem, 19 April 1979.

²⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 18 October 1978.

the Lyon administration generally modified or abandoned the NDP government's educational policies. The main exception to this has been the former government's minority languages policy. Since taking office the Conservative government has made no significant changes in this area. Initial government reticence in regard to the Bureau De L'Education Française, however, did create apprehension among BEF staff and the French community.²⁷

Since the election of the Conservative government, editorial criticism regarding education has been conspicuously non-existent. Press comments, if any, have been supportive. Similarly, Manitoba's major educational bodies, the MTS and MAST, have been cautiously supportive of government actions with their prime concern being the threat of fiscal cutbacks and the curtailment of their powers.²⁸ The general public, for its part, as indicated by the absence of feature articles and letters to the editor, appears quiescent.

The educational policies of the NDP during the period from 1969 to 1975 did not develop in isolation or as anomalies peculiar only to Manitoba. Progressive education had been gaining momentum across Canada, the United States and other nations with advanced educational systems such as England and Australia.²⁹ Three theories can be offered to explain the emergence of progressivism in Manitoba. According to the "cycles" or "pendulum" theory, Canadian educational history has witnessed many alternating cycles of "traditional" and

²⁷ Personal knowledge.

²⁸ Winnipeg Tribune, 18 March 1978; Idem, 28 March 1978; Idem, 30 March 1978.

²⁹ CEA, Education in Transition, pp. 12-14; MacLean's, 15 December 1975, p. 59; Time Magazine, 31 March 1975, p. 52; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Britannica Book of the Year 1977 (Chicago:Encyclopaedia Britannica,1977),p.296.

"progressive" periods. George S. Tompkins claims that from 1950 to 1970 alone four overlapping cycles, customarily accompanied by "sharp, often acrimonious debates" by the two opposing forces, have occurred.³⁰ The latest cycle of progressivism began in the mid-sixties after overcoming the cycle of traditionalism sparked by the "Sputnik crisis" in 1957 when Americans looked to their educational system to regain the technical superiority temporarily lost to the Soviet Union.³¹

Since the 1960s was also the decade when mass education came into its own, another explanation for the popularity of progressive education has been based upon the demise of the "little red school house" or one-room school. According to this theory, the school is often fondly remembered as being a centre where parents congregated for various social and civic functions. This provided parents with contact with their children's teacher and principal and there existed a feeling of familiarity and community. With school district consolidation and the growth of larger urban centres at the expense of rural communities, however, the character of education changed and it became more difficult for parents to influence school policy. Professional administrators took control and established complex bureaucracies. "Parents and other laymen became almost unnecessary, except to furnish students and periodically elect trustees."³² These

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"Tradition and Change in Canadian Education: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," in Precepts Policy and Process, pp. 1, 14.

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Ibid., p. 9.

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Robert Stamp, "The Little Dead Schoolhouse: A Report on Education," Weekend Magazine, 6 September 1975, p. 3.

changes were justified on the basis of greater efficiency and greater equality of opportunity for the fast growing school populations. However, a corollary to the "bigger and better" consolidation trend was the suspicion that schools were becoming dehumanized and that education may not necessarily produce the direct economic rewards promised in the earlier "learn more to earn more" campaigns. Consequently, in the late 1960s and early 1970s educators began to speak of education's proper goal as being the encouragement of "individual personal development" through the adoption of a "child-centered" approach.³³ This shift in school focus reflected the progressive education goal of "liberal-humanists" who sought to overcome the feeling of individual powerlessness created by the modern corporate society with its big cities and bureaucracies.

In contrast to the liberal-humanist explanation stands the "conservative" theory that society as a whole has become permissive and that it became untenable to have a hard school in a soft society. The school, by becoming preoccupied with the so-called needs of the child as opposed to the needs of society, as exemplified by allowing academic standards to decline and by abandoning corporal punishment,³⁴ contributed to the general malaise. According to the conservatives,

³³ CEA, Education in Transition, pp. 12 - 14.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 8 - 9.

contrary to popular opinion, schools have not been unresponsive to the community. The current educational debacle is, to a large measure, attributable to the change in attitudes of parents who, unlike in the past, are more prone to supporting their children against the authority of the teacher.³⁵

Regardless of which view one adopts to explain the shift to progressive education in Manitoba during the period from 1969 to 1975, the pattern began in the mid-sixties prior to the NDP's election. As early as 1965 the Manitoba government intimated the need for a wider range of subjects and a greater flexibility of student options to be in tune with "changing concepts in education."³⁶ Within the next three years, the Conservative governments of Roblin and Weir took a number of steps which reflected the influence of progressive educational ideas. Beginning in 1966, the role of school inspectors began to diminish.³⁷ Departmental curriculum outlines began advocating a new approach to teaching which at the elementary level encouraged child-centredness, discovery techniques and continuous progress. At higher grade levels, Literature, Composition, Spelling and Grammar were replaced by Language Arts which placed less stress on language structure and more on creativity.³⁸ By 1968 the Department of

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W.D. Valgardson, "Free the Teacher," Weekend Magazine, 5 February 1977, pp. 12 - 14.

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Manitoba, Annual Report 1965-66, p. 20.

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Idem, Annual Report 1966-67, p. 26.

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Ibid., pp. 36 - 37; Idem, Annual Report 1967-68, p. 17

Education had withdrawn from administering examinations at the grade nine, ten and eleven levels. School divisions also began experimenting. In 1968 Fort Garry S.D., for instance, built its first open area school and Winnipeg S.D. allowed Gordon Bell High School to experiment with a non-graded, multi-optional curriculum.³⁹

Although progressive education swept not only Canada but other countries as well, the degree to which it was adopted by Manitoba was not inevitable. Because of its philosophic beliefs, the NDP proved to be particularly fertile and accommodating to the progressive philosophy's promise to reform traditional schools and eventually society. Given the sentiments espoused by the Conservative party during the period 1969-75, it is highly unlikely that it, in the place of the NDP, would have invested comparable amounts of money and effort in reforming the province's public school system. But imbued with feelings of purpose and destiny by having formed its first government in Manitoba's history, the NDP embraced a philosophy which appeared to coincide with its own vision of the need for change. As the decade of the protesting sixties was followed by optimistic expectations of great changes to meet the demands of the future, educational rhetoric extolling "rapid societal change" and "futuristics," reinforced the enthusiasm of the Schreyer administration in hailing progressive education.

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Winnipeg Tribune, 25 June 1974; Idem, 27 July 1971.

During the period from 1969 to 1975 the extent to which the government's individual policies were supported or challenged varied according to their proximity to the traditional functions and methods of the school system. Thus, the government's policy of extending minority language rights was generally accepted as were those aspects of the equalization policy whose objectives were directly related to equality of opportunity. At the other end of the spectrum, the NDP's policies of democratizing the schools and fostering experimentation were seen as too alien to be accepted as legitimate directions for Manitoba schools. It was at this end of the policy spectrum that the embodiment of progressive ideas was most pronounced. Whether the more controversial policies of the NDP government were beneficial or detrimental to Manitoba's public school system in general, is a broad issue for debate which cannot be adequately examined here. But they may be appraised, briefly, in terms of their effects on those for whom the New Democratic Party commonly expressed concern -- the poor and the working classes. This has been attempted in the Appendix which follows.

APPENDIX
A PERSONAL EVALUATION OF THE
MANITOBA NDP'S EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

For a just and egalitarian society it is generally accepted, and particularly so by the New Democratic Party, that the rewards of social status, power, or income should go to those who are the most competent and diligent. Success in such a society should not be affected by skin colour, ethnicity, economic background, or other irrelevant factors but only by actual merit. In short, a just society embraces the notion of equality of opportunity for all. The social strategy for achieving equality of opportunity has placed great emphasis upon education. It has been commonly understood that if schools could equalize people's cognitive skills, this would equalize their bargaining power as adults. If everyone had equal bargaining power, few would end up very poor. Thus, eliminating poverty is largely a matter of assisting children born into poverty to rise out of it. Once families escape from poverty, they rarely fall back into it. Middle class children seldom become poor adults. The primary reason poor children cannot escape from poverty is that they do not acquire basic intellectual skills. They cannot read, write, calculate or articulate well. Lacking these skills, they subsequently cannot get or keep well-paid jobs. The best mechanism for breaking this vicious circle is education. Since children from poor homes do not acquire the skills they need from their parents, it is crucial that

they be taught these skills in school.¹

If equality of opportunity is advanced, society's occupational structures will reflect a more rational allocation of ability. When those who reach the upper levels of the school system are less able than many who drop out of it, society's investment in education is being wasted and the very valuable resource of human talent is being lost. A system which does not strive to provide equal opportunity is inefficient as well as undemocratic. Equality of opportunity, however, is meaningless unless the education available is of the highest quality. There is democracy in education when those parents who are freest of all, those who are knowledgeable and wealthy, send their children to the same schools that receive the children of the poor and ignorant, simply because those are the best schools. But more equality of education alone does not ensure equality of opportunity, not if the education generally available is poor. In a society of incompetents, the wealthy and "well-connected" incompetent are advantaged because in such a society no other criteria are socially effective. A first-rate education on the other hand, can free children from an environment of intellectual and cultural poverty. The children of the upper classes are privileged in their very home lives; they are able, from their family circumstances, to learn what a fully developed life can be. The children whose parents

¹ Christopher Jencks et al., "The Schools and Equal Opportunity," in Crucial Issues in Education, ed. Henry Ehlers (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 42.

have been limited by material, spiritual and cultural poverty are not so fortunate. For them education remains their greatest hope.

The progressive education which emerged in the mid-sixties and flowered in the early seventies likely hurt Manitoba's lower classes. Although a minority of educators insisted that academic standards had not dropped during this period, students, parents, businessmen, university officials and Manitoba's current provincial government were convinced that the "do your own thing" philosophy of education indeed led to a dilution of basic skills instruction.² Statistics from the United States, which has similarly experienced progressive education, unequivocally supported public fears that student performance had been deteriorating. After edging upward for more than a century, the reading, writing and mathematical skills of American students from elementary to college began, from the mid-1960s through 1976, to decline.³ According to nation-wide Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), and other standardized tests, student achievement in 1975 was significantly below the American average of a decade earlier. SAT scores fell from a mean of 473 on the verbal section in 1965 to a mean of 434 in 1975, and from a mean of 496 on the mathematics section in 1965 to a mean of 472 in 1975.⁴ Yet, at the same time as declining achievement engulfed America's educational

² Winnipeg Tribune, 25 May 1974; Winnipeg Free Press, 11 September 1976; Winnipeg Tribune, 20 July 1978.

³ Jack McCurdy and Don Speich, "U.S. education goes downhill," three part series from Los Angeles Times published in Winnipeg Free Press, 8, 9, 10, September, 1976.

⁴ James P. Clark and Scott D. Thomson, Competency Tests and Graduation Requirements (Reston, Virginia: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED126160, 1976), p. 11.

system, paradoxically, wholesale grade inflation took place whereby students received higher marks for worse work. While the knowledge that students could demonstrate on objective tests declined, the subjective ratings of student abilities by teachers inclined. The only significant exception to this pattern was in science knowledge in college-bound students and college graduates. Research in 1976 indicated that the decline was "real" and not, for example, the appreciable result of changes in the ethnic or socio-economic makeup of the students or other external forces such as television.⁵ Subsequent research sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board in New York and the Educational Testing Service in Princeton concluded that until 1970 the decline was due to increased numbers of students from the lower classes, but that after 1970 other social factors in combination with school practices such as increased electives and automatic grade promotions were to blame.⁶ Some American researchers have suggested that due to changes in the tests used over the years, the actual drop in achievement was about 50 percent greater than that recorded. The contention that gifted students, at least, were doing better than ever before has also been dashed. The number of SAT scores over 600 during the 1965-75 period also dropped.⁷

According to a four-month Los Angeles Times investigation, the drop in American academic standards was primarily the result of a

⁵ Time Magazine, 31 March 1975, p. 52.

⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 24 August 1977.

⁷ Time Magazine, 14 November 1977, p. 58.

shift in social and educational values which began in the mid-sixties but did not mature until the 1970s. This shift in educational emphasis was characterized by a reduction of basic course and graduation requirements; grade inflation facilitating promotion with less effort; greater absenteeism particularly in academic classes; curricular changes emphasizing creativity rather than academic rigor; and an enormous push for vocational training which further lessened the importance of academic studies. Most affected by these changes were the humanities and social sciences. SAT and GRE scores show that the single most direct contributor to the achievement decline was the shift from basic course requirements to an array of topical or glamorous, but less demanding, electives. In areas where electives were numerous such as in the social sciences, the scores dropped sharply. In the sciences where there were more requirements and fewer electives, scores rose. Yet, notwithstanding the evidence of declining achievement and grade inflation, in 1976 many American school officials and associations refused to acknowledge that the decline existed. Others attempted to minimize its importance by stressing other aspects of schooling. Those who conceded the existence of the problem channelled the blame to a variety of factors outside of the schools.⁸

In addition to declining SAT and GRE scores, there have been numerous other indicators to suggest that the American educational

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McCurdy and Speich, "U.S. education goes downhill," Winnipeg Free Press, 10 September 1976.

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system was failing. In 1975, the National Assessment of Education Progress reported that in a nation-wide survey of seventeen year old students and young adults, inability to use fundamental mathematic principles, for example in dealing with fractions, prevented many consumers from shopping wisely. Comparative surveys of writing skills in 1970 and 1974 showed that American thirteen and seventeen year olds were using a more limited vocabulary and were writing in a more elementary "primer-like" style in 1974 than in 1970. The Association of American Publishers revised its textbook study guide for college freshmen in 1975 by gearing the reading level down to the ninth grade. Cases of high school graduates incapable of reading their diploma and high school valedictorians unable to score sufficiently to gain entrance to average universities drew considerable publicity as the "graduates", or their parents, launched lawsuits¹⁰ alleging negligence and fraud against school authorities. The American government's Office of Education reported in 1975 that more than 23 million adults, about one in every five, lacked the basic know-how to function effectively in a modern society. Less than half of the nation's adult population were found to be proficient in reading, writing, computation, and problem-solving skills.¹¹ According to the

⁹ Clark and Thompson, Competency Tests, p. 11.

¹⁰ Newsweek, 6 September 1976, p. 52; Winnipeg Free Press, 15 September 1976; Idem, 16 March 1977.

¹¹ Winnipeg Free Press, 30 October 1975.

American Council for Basic Education, the main cause of functional illiteracy is no longer a non-school factor such as immigration or too little schooling, but rather it is a deficiency in the quality of schooling.¹²

Annual comprehensive statistical evidence similar to America's SAT and GRE results is unavailable for Canada. Consequently, studies and statistics pertaining to academic standards are disparate, irregular and often contradictory. Those studies conducted by provincial governments, school divisions, teachers' societies and other bodies generally lack comparative criteria and commonality. Some compare their target samples with American norms, some with Canadian norms and others with English test standards.¹³ Some indicate that standards have decreased while others indicate that standards have increased. In the aggregate, these conflicting results have produced more heat than light in the debate between traditionalists and progressives. In Manitoba, the NDP administration argued that academic standards had not declined and statistics supportive of this position were offered by the Planning and Research Branch.¹⁴ The

¹² George Weber, "Functional Illiteracy in the United States," in Britannica Book of the Year 1977, p. 302.

¹³ Cf., Winnipeg Tribune, 5 April 1971; MAST, Journal (4 March 1977): 18; Winnipeg Free Press, 6 September 1975; Idem, 15 March 1976; Winnipeg Tribune, 16 August 1978; CTV, "Inquiry," 15 March 1976, Script, pp. 6, 19.

¹⁴ Manitoba, ERPA, "1976-77 Budget Proposal," pp. 8 - 9; Winnipeg Free Press, 11 September 1976.

new Conservative government, on the other hand, has initiated a provincial testing program at the grades three, six, nine, and twelve levels to ascertain how low standards have dropped. ¹⁵ There exists, however, one piece of hard statistical evidence which suggests that Manitoba has experienced the same effect as other localities where progressive educational ideas were adopted. A comparison of University Entrance Program grade twelve examination passing rates for the years 1970, 1971 and 1972 is revealing:

Subject	<u>Student Passing Rates</u>		
	1970 %	1971 %	1972 %
English	66.97	93.4	94.4
Geography	67.43	94.2	95.0
History	67.43	93.8	96.0
Mathematics	83.05	91.5	92.5
Chemistry	69.12	92.1	94.1
Physics	67.05	91.3	98.9
Physics PSSC	76.11	91.8	93.5
Biology	65.38	96.7	96.9
Biology BSCS	66.17	94.5	95.5
French	72.94	95.6	97.6
Français	77.97	98.6	98.7
German	82.91	98.7	97.4
Ukrainian	64.29	99.1	98.9

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It is interesting to note that although the testing program involves only 10 percent of Manitoba's students in the selected grades, 75 percent of the province's schools are voluntarily testing all their students in grades three, six, nine, and twelve. Reportedly principals now feel that "a two-hour exam is good for students." Winnipeg Free Press, 17 May 1979.

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Beyond 1972 no statistics are available on provincial passing rates in Manitoba. Manitoba, Annual Report 1969-70, p. 124; Idem, Bulletin 9 (November 1972):3.

The year 1970 was the last in which Departmental examinations were written by grade twelve students. In subsequent years teachers and schools decided for themselves what types of examinations, if any, would be written. With the abolition of uniform examinations in 1970, a dramatic increase in the student passing rates in all subjects occurred in 1971. Passing rates increased even further in the following year in almost all subjects. Thus, failure at the school system's highest and ostensibly most difficult scholastic level became a rarity in Manitoba. Other than this sole indicator, statistical evidence demonstrating that standards may have dropped during 1969-75 is scarce.¹⁷ The empirical evidence based upon the reactions to the NDP government's policies, however, is overwhelming in quantity if not quality and need not be repeated.

As one newspaper editor has asked, if our high schools are indeed producing only semi-literate university-bound graduates after twelve years of education, what kind of knowledge do those students have who did not do well or who dropped out of school early?¹⁸ The spectre of falling standards imperils the future of the lower classes not only because of the direct negative effect on students, but also

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Of possible relevance here are the highlights of a recent three-year investigation into academic standards commissioned by the Alberta government in 1976. The investigation revealed that while academic standards at the grade three level were marginally better than they were in 1956, Alberta's high schools experienced a marked "grade inflation" with the discontinuation of provincially set examinations in 1973. For further detail see Alberta, Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement, Student Achievement in Alberta (n. p., 1979).

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Winnipeg Free Press, 12 July 1976.

because of the indirect effect on the general public. After decades of striving to attain equality of opportunity through mass public education, the backlash to progressive education has created an impasse such that the commitment to mass education is being questioned. The price of education has been enormous and the questions of costs and standards are intertwined. The charge of declining standards is a challenge to the historic public commitment to mass education. Falling standards may be perceived to signify the failure of mass education and may therefore lead to a dilution of that commitment. The general public, disinterested in the vagaries of educational development, reasons that if high school graduates and even university graduates do not know much and cannot get jobs, why bother investing so much money in mass education?¹⁹ Recent events give credence to the possibility of such a shift in attitude. In sharp contrast to views espoused during the early 1970s, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents stated in 1978 that the school leaving age should be dropped from sixteen to fifteen to "weed out" those students who do poorly or do not want to remain in school! As well, MASS indicated that in recognition of the increasing costs of education and the inability of education to guarantee employment, it was in favour of an upper age limit such as eighteen or twenty-one beyond which school divisions would no longer have to provide

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Stevens Muller, "American Education Standards Are Slipping," Today's Education 64 (November-December 1975):50-51.

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students with an education. Coupled with the Conservative government's decision in 1979 to shift more public funds to finance private schools, it appears that the commitment to mass public education is indeed being challenged.²¹ Any such diminution in society's commitment to public education would clearly be detrimental to the welfare of children from the lower classes whose only escape from their predicament is access to a free and worthwhile education.

Numerous critics, as well as some proponents of progressive education, feel that that philosophy fails to meet the real needs of the lower classes. The question arises as to what the broad goal of equality in education really means. Does it imply equal schools, that is equal treatment, or does it imply equal students? J.S. Coleman points out that what comes out of student achievement in areas such as reading and arithmetic are skills that are important for success not only in further schooling but also in the labour market. What matters to the student is not how "equal" his school is, but rather whether he will be equipped to compete on an equal basis with others, whatever his social background. Schools are successful only insofar as they reduce the dependence of a child's opportunities upon his social origins. Hence, equality of opportunity implies, not merely "equal" schools, but rather "equally effective schools, whose influences will overcome the differences in starting points of children from

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Winnipeg Tribune, 27 June 1978.

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Idem, 23 January 1979.

different social groups."²²

It is precisely upon this crucial issue of the significance of social background that the progressive philosophy of education abandons the children of the lower classes. Within the realm of progressive education everything must be "meaningful," that is, of interest to the child. Everything must somehow be related to the background of experience possessed by the individual, and if at all possible, must grow out of that background. This approach to instruction poses obvious difficulties, particularly for the child who happens to have a culturally impoverished background and a paucity of experiences above and beyond those needed for survival in his lower class neighborhood. On the other hand, for the child who is growing up in more gracious surroundings, complete with home library, classical record albums and trips ranging anywhere from Europe to the local museum, this approach might conceivably work. But for the children of the lower classes, the progressive approach with its emphasis upon adjusting to the environment and drawing from one's everyday experiences can be somewhat unproductive. Those children who already exhibit signs of educational impoverishment, if left largely to "incidental learning," would likely behave in ways resulting in the exaggeration of the cleavages that already separate social classes within our society.²³

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J.S. Coleman as cited in T. Husen ed., Social Background and Educational Career (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1972), p. 15.

23

Philip W. Jackson, Amitai Etzioni, and John Ohlinger, "Farewell to Schools? -- NO!", in Crucial Issues in Education, p. 210.

According to scientist and social theorist B.F. Skinner, the progressive philosophy of education neglects two vital points. First, no one learns very much from the real world without help. Formal education has made a tremendous difference in the extent of skills and knowledge which can be acquired by a person in a single lifetime. Second, the real world teaches only what is relevant to the present. It makes no explicit preparation for the future. It has been the task of formal education to prepare students for the future. Thus, to allow students to decide what form this preparation will take upon the basis of their current interests is a mere "illusion of freedom" leading to disaster.²⁴

Even free school advocate Jonathan Kozol admits that it is often the rich college graduate with years of high-cost, rigorous and sequential education who is determined that poor children should make clay vases, weave Indian headbands, play with Polaroid cameras and climb over geodesic domes. Kozol is not surprised that lower class parents are shocked by school officials who tell them that their children do not really need degrees; do not need Mathematics or English; do not need to go to college; do not need wicked, middle class success. Parents are shocked because what they do not need is a new generation of radical basket-weavers! Rather, what is needed, states Kozol, is a generation of "radical, strong, subversive obstetricians, pediatricians, lab technicians, and defence attorneys."²⁵

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"The Free and Happy Student," Phi Delta Kappan, September 1973, pp. 14 - 15.

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"Free Schools Fail Because They Don't Teach," Psychology Today, April 1972, p. 36.

Despite the "hip talk" about rapid change, our society will likely continue to have the same basic technical needs as it has had until now.²⁶ Transition from one societal pattern to another will not be abrupt. Hence, schools should help prepare the student for a better society but it is premature to prepare him for the good society envisioned by the progressives. Misdirected goals prevent the school system from equipping its graduates to bring about the reforms which society needs.

According to British novelist and self-acclaimed Socialist Iris Murdoch, selection must and will take place in education and those progressives who banish traditional methods are simply hurting poor children with ability:

The children who will be lost forever are the poor clever children with an illiterate background who on the 'chance' system are being denied the right to a strict academic education which can only be achieved on the basis of some sort of selection....The denial of rigorous education to working class children will in the long run militate against the very social mixing which is supposed to be the object of the exercise if it turns out in the future that our only cultivated citizens are middle class.²⁷

A few left-wingers in Manitoba have voiced similar views. In 1974, Wally Johannson informed the legislature that working class and rural children are different from the children of the wealthy who have home advantages which assist them to do well under any educational system. If they do not do well, their parents can "cushion" their

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Amitai Etzioni, "Glorious Ideals -- And Harsh Realities," in Crucial Issues in Education, p. 245.

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Iris Murdoch as cited in Winnipeg Free Press, 10 May 1975.

failure with their resources such as taking them into the family business. Progressive education, on the other hand, penalizes working class and rural children:

The only way that these kids are going to become upwardly mobile, the only way they're going to improve their position in the economic world, is by acquiring knowledge and skills. I think that we are stopping that upward mobility for these kids.²⁸

Even Cy Gonick, who has been considered to be a radical within the NDP, abandoned his progressive position of 1970 and criticized Orlikow in 1976:

Orlikow's school products would be intellectual cripples quite unprepared to function in the world of work, nor prepared to partake in our cultural life. That may be just fine for River Heights and Tuxedo children. They will pick up the basic skills at home. In any event, wealth is a substitute for achievement in entering and completing university these days. But what about the children of working class parents? They count on the public school system preparing them for decent work. The open classroom, stress on "group decision-making" and "conflict-resolution" may be fun and games for the middle-class, but they are ill-considered as priorities for children of working people.²⁹

Progressive education is inappropriate for the lower classes not only because of its reliance upon the child's "positive" background experiences, but also because of its failure to consider the actual environment from which lower class children usually come. In fact, there is reason to believe that better education for the disadvantaged

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Dismayed at Johansson's critical comments, fellow NDP members urged each other to check his breath. Manitoba, Debates, 9 May 1974, pp. 3296,3293.

29

Letter to the editor, in Winnipeg Tribune, 20 February 1976.

student is dependent upon providing a relatively large amount of structure in his educational experiences. This belief is directly related to the characteristics of disadvantaged children and of the family, community, and educational environments in which they live and go to school. The lives of many disadvantaged students and adults can be described as unstable. For many of the poor, chaos in daily life is an inescapable effect of poverty. Among the conditions which make the lives of low-income citizens disorderly are unemployment, poor health, over-crowding, alcoholism and a general lack of sufficient income.

A second and related characteristic of the disadvantaged is the general sense of insecurity created among individuals when short-range as well as long-range needs are frequently unsatisfied or inconsistently fulfilled. Studies have found that disadvantaged students tend to function at a lower conceptual level than do students from more privileged backgrounds. Preoccupied with immediate needs, they have difficulty in understanding others' points of view and in concentrating on abstract tasks.

Another frequently noted characteristic of the disadvantaged student is his short attention span when confronted with the tasks and materials typical of school programs. Compared to more advantaged students, he generally has had little experience attending to complex

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R.C. Doll and D.U. Levine, "Toward A Definition of Structure," in Opening Opportunities for Disadvantaged Learners, ed. A.H. Passow (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), p. 132.

verbal explanations or following sets of verbal or written instructions.

Also, numerous sociological studies have established that there are systematic differences between the child-raising practices of the middle class and the working class.³¹ These differences cluster in two distinct areas of training -- development of internalized controls and learning of achievement motivation. These studies reveal the critical role of anxiety as a reinforcement for achievement strivings in the middle class training scheme; and they reveal that the middle class child is faced with early and consistent demands for personal attainment. Moreover, since the middle class not only places stress on accomplishment, but imposes demands earlier than does the working class, it was found that the need for achievement is more generalized in middle class children than in children of lower status.³² Intellectual stimulation elicits a relatively consistent reaction among middle class children irrespective of the reward conditions of the specific situation. Since working class children, on the other hand, are taught achievement strivings neither so early nor so systematically, their responses to stimulation have been found to be more contingent upon the direct reward potential of the situation.

In view of this factor alone, it is clear that progressive education with its aim of minimizing competitive achievement and hence

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E. Dourvan, "Social Status and Success Strivings," in The Disadvantaged Learner, ed. S.W. Webster (San Francisco: Chandler Publishers, 1966), p. 305.

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Ibid.

motivation, is ill-suited for disadvantaged students. In effect, by discouraging the notions of hard work, achievement and advancement in favor of undisciplined "spontaneity," "creativity" and the negation of success, progressive education undermines the possibility of upward social mobility for the children of the lower classes. Rather than aiding these disadvantaged classes in improving their circumstances, progressive education confuses and distracts them into an acceptance of the virtue of being poor but "creative."

It would be easy to continue listing the characteristics of disadvantaged students and their problems inside and outside of school. Enough has been said, however, to indicate why teachers who work with lower class students should provide them with educational experiences carefully structured to constitute an orderly environment where they can feel secure and in which they receive step-by-step guidance.

There has always been some truth in the accusation that when the schools make social adjustment a co-equal objective with the three Rs, neither objective can be effectively met. In lower class schools especially, the standard progressive curriculum does not meet pupil needs. Many educators argue that the basic need for disadvantaged children is the "know-how" to function in society. They assert that basic learning skills are essential for them to compete on an equal

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J.A. Lancer, "The Disadvantaged, the Three R's, and Individual Differences," in Education and the Many Faces of the Disadvantaged, ed. W.W. Brickman (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1972), p. 48.

basis. Attempts to change values, to insist on social adjustment, meet little success and negate efforts to teach skills. The school must work hard to overcome the deficiencies of these students, especially their anti-intellectualism and their lack of language mastery. Studies comparing the abilities of students in progressive classrooms and traditional classrooms seldom report similar results. However, in one noteworthy comparative study of twelve special project schools for disadvantaged students in New York City, test results showed that students attending structured schools did better than those in progressive schools in skill and achievement tests and showed fewer signs of inability to get along with others. Evidence of a positive correlation between school adjustment and academic performance was also noted.³⁴

In a 1975 cross-Canada survey of Canadian schools, two middle class parent-authors concluded that:

Those afflicted by the failings of the schools are the lower class -- the poor. The children of welfare families. The kids from one-parent homes. The immigrants, locked behind their language as well as their lower standard of living. Even the children of parents who speak English and work, but only as laborers, begin school with much more of a handicap than middle-class kids.³⁵

In the opinion of these parents, the school system must endeavour to assist more those who have traditionally gotten the least from it.

34

N. Mills, "Free Versus Directed Schools," in Educating the Disadvantaged, ed. E. Flaxman (New York: AMS Press, 1973), p. 283.

35

Paul Grescoe and Aubrey Grescoe, "The Kids We Fail," The Canadian, 20 September 1975, p. 2.

Thus, to better serve the lower classes, schools should return to the basics.

According to John Porter, one of Canada's most eminent sociologists, despite the weaknesses of the educational system as it was developing in the 1960s, it did not deserve the criticism that was heaped upon it. The subsequent loosening up of the educational system has meant the demise of achievement. From the point of view of equality of opportunity, the changes that took place and the accompanying downgrading of scholastic certification were "regressive rather than progressive." As public education became widely accessible it became diluted but not necessarily because it dipped lower into the ability pool. The "freeing up" of public education was a middle class movement. It was their children who became bored with the process because they were learning so much outside of school. Porter states that when certification is downgraded, middle class children are less likely to suffer than lower class children and they may even have a distinct advantage by substituting social contacts for grades and parental acumen for diplomas. At one time, certification, school grades, objective examinations and external curricular surveillance were all part of a liberal appeal to universal standards free of class, ethnic, religious and sex bias. A certificate that meant something indicated that you were just as good as the next fellow wherever both of you might have come from.

We never did achieve this happy state because just at the point education became more attractive to those of lower social classes and other less favourable environments, the middle

class began to dismantle public education, and so they may well be in the process of removing one of the most important instruments of upward mobility, the certificate of achievement.³⁶

Like Porter, W.D. Valgardson states that the honest attempts to reform education in the late fifties and early sixties eventually turned into anarchy in the seventies. What reformers forgot to consider in their eagerness was the powerful nature of student and parental pressure. When external examinations were abolished and student evaluation was left to local teachers, the argument used by progressives was that teachers were professionals. They would grade objectively and independently. This, states Valgardson, has proven to be excessively naive. School boards and school administrators could not stand up to political pressures and consequently exerted pressure upon teachers. Thus, if no learning was being done, teachers were to hide the fact and avoid trouble. Once the student graduated, he became someone else's problem.

What the abolition of exams did was to remove an element of fairness. The situation wasn't perfect. Some students, because their parents had university educations or had enough money to provide books, travel, tutors or other benefits, were better prepared. However, the solution to this problem would have been to help the disadvantaged. Instead, we reduced the value of a high school education to nothing.³⁷

In the belief that a democracy requires that we should educate

36

John Porter, "Education and Occupational Opportunity in the Canadian Mosaic," speech presented to the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 6 June 1973, Manuscript, p. 20; Winnipeg Tribune, 6 June 1973.

37

W.D. Valgardson, "Free the Teacher," pp. 13 - 14.

as many people as possible, tremendous strides have been taken to push large numbers of students through school. Unfortunately, somewhere along the line there comes a time when some cannot perform the learning skills required of them. Whenever this occurred a number of techniques were employed to keep them in school and they were pushed up through the grades and out of high school with a diploma that looked pretty much like the others. This was called "social promotion," or "keeping up with one's peers" and was accompanied by a grading system designed to "confuse the parent, please the student, and protect the teacher."³⁸ The diploma represented our attempts to "be fair, give him a chance, and to do the right thing."³⁹ However, such a diploma informs the student that he can perform as well as other classmates who have a diploma similar to his. Thus, when he applies for a job or continues to a post-secondary institution, he does not expect to change his previous pattern of behaviour or the standards which earned him his diploma.⁴⁰ During the period 1969-75, there was a reluctance on the part of Manitoba teachers to give accurate assessments of student achievement and to fail students in academic courses. A major reason for this was the progressive notion that to fail students in school would be to label them "failures" in society and hence damage their self-esteem. Yet, the consequences of not evaluating accurately can

38

Hershel H. Nelson, The Measure of Learning (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED095984, 1973), p. 8.

39

Ibid.

40

Ibid., p. 9.

be tragic for the individual. People are unequal in intellectual ability and academic marks should reflect that fact. Giving students high marks for effort alone may be justifiable in the early grades but as students increase in age, encouragement is quite apart from misleading appraisal. Egalitarian aims can be paradoxical and divergent from true social equality wherein we respect one another's differences and realize our interdependence. According to David R. Cook:

There is a frightening amount of evidence available that our society is becoming intellectually polarized into two classes. One consists of an articulate elite who are able to ratiocinate lucidly and to recognize and express among themselves intellectual nuances derived through clarity of expression. Then there are the masses who are frustrated in attempts to express thoughts and feelings.⁴¹

Somewhat responsible for this trend is a scholastic grading system which deludes students with inflated marks and leaves them in the "position of the emperor without any clothes."⁴² Aspirations to egalitarianism that lead to an inadequate recognition in the educational system of intellectual differences can result in injustice and the emergence of an elite which too often has members whose sense of authority is greater than their sense of responsibility.⁴³ Since an

41

David R. Cook, "Student Writing: It Is Dissolving Into the New Illiteracy," The English Quarterly 8(Fall 1975):35.

42

Ibid., p. 39.

43

See Robert O'Kell, "The Politics of Illiteracy" in Manitoba, Education Manitoba 2(January-February, 1976):20-23.

elite will form in any advanced society, we should try to ensure that its members are aware of their dependence on others and of their duty not only to lead, but also to serve. An educational system which provides sound education to all children would be a method through which diversified class representation would result in the make-up of society's elite.

What has been advanced as sound education during the period 1969-1975 has been described as a "swindle" by some observers, wherein half a generation was "gambled" with and lost.⁴⁴ Many students discover after "graduation" that, in effect, they have been cheated -- that an inferior and insubstantial education has been given them like a political pacifier. Qualifications are turning out to be only paper qualifications. As long as there is a buoyant economy, these might be enough to get one of the marginal and unrewarding, if sometimes well-paid, jobs of which there are plenty in such an economy; but if and when the economy enters a recession, many such graduates would find themselves unemployed. And all the talk of retraining and going back to school three times in a life-time would be of little use to those who had not been well educated to begin with.

Even worse, a person in such a state might discover that the equality of opportunity that he believed he had been enjoying by going to school as long as anybody else, was but a facade masking the continuance of privilege. He might discover that the children of the

⁴⁴
CTV, "Inquiry," p. 29.

wealthy had been exposed to a depth of education unlike anything he himself had experienced, and that now, at the end of his own education, and whatever his own native gifts, he was in no position to compete with them. The graduate might come to realize too late, that the easy-going and undemanding nature of his education that had seemed to reflect infinite concern for his emotional welfare stood in direct, stark contrast to the rigorous and challenging education available for those who could attend private schools.

Since education has the dual aspect of serving the individual and society, the community would find itself no less cheated than the individual in a situation such as the one described. Biased educational "inflation," for it is precisely that, implies a situation in which more and more educational currency is put in circulation -- years of schooling, diplomas and degrees of all kinds -- but the intrinsic worth of this currency is declining, with the result that the actual education any one student receives may be so depreciated as to have little marketable value.

But in describing the inherent inadequacies of progressive education with respect to the children of the lower classes, a return to the Manitoba school system of the 1950s is not being advocated. It should be remembered that as late as 1959 only one out of every eight students reached high school in Manitoba.⁴⁵ This elite 12.5 percent student body which survived the weeding process of the then inflexible

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Winnipeg Tribune, 20 August 1975.

and narrowly academic school system was seldom composed of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The academically weak, the "late bloomers" and those whose mother tongue was not English were not accommodated within the university oriented curriculum and often dropped out of school. Equality of opportunity was certainly no greater then, than during the period from 1969 to 1975.

It is ironic that while the NDP government espoused support for local control, individualization and other corollary concepts whose objectives were to meet the varying needs of a diverse student population, it completely discounted the possibility that the progressive philosophy of education would not be suited to all social classes, rich or poor. In so doing, the government inadvertently reinforced the possibility that education may have little effect in determining success in life and that external factors such as family background, race and fortuity are stronger determinants.

A review of the history of education in Manitoba since 1870 reveals dramatic change in both tangible and intangible forms. Public school education, to various degrees, has been subject to cycles or swings involving two broad educational philosophies. The period from 1969 to 1975 was one of particularly intense change and one wherein progressivism overcame traditionalism. Yet, despite the element of change in both concrete and philosophical terms throughout the educational history of Manitoba, public school education, in one respect, has remained the same. Learning continues to be based upon teachers teaching students. Teachers have remained modern society's main

transmitters of its knowledge, skills and values. The permanence of this factor within the educational system has acted as a stabilizer, moderating the potential excesses of shifts in educational philosophy. Classroom practitioners and not educational pundits in government, school divisions or universities have the greatest impact upon the development of student minds. Thus, the importance of teachers as an instrument for the advancement of equality of opportunity deserves to be reassessed and expanded. Teachers are capable of deeply affecting their students and the importance of encouraging and assisting disadvantaged students in particular, to overcome their social environment, is obvious. In this respect, while progressive education may be criticized as ineffectual and misdirecting, traditional education may be criticized as simply disinterested in the advancement of the lower classes. Ideally then, what is required is an eclectic approach to education which encompasses the strengths of both conflicting methods while by-passing their weaknesses.

This objective is achievable if one accepts the premise that the professional skill of teaching is transmittable -- that teachers are made, not born. Thus, while the innate properties of an individual can facilitate or interfere with his professional skill, and because learning is inextricably woven with teaching, the improvement of the educational system is directly responsive to the quality of teaching which occurs. The teaching process, which can be succinctly defined as "conscious behaviour which makes learning more probable and

more efficient than it would have been without that behaviour,"⁴⁶ is the paramount ingredient within the school system capable of affecting upward social mobility. Fortunately, it is a factor which is controllable.

The teaching profession with the assistance of government has travelled a great distance in the last few decades in respect to standards and qualifications. However, that is not to say that the summit has been now reached and there is no further to advance. In fact, quite the contrary is true. The challenges facing Manitoba's public schools have not diminished. They have increased in both number and kind. Thus, to meet the demands of the 1980s, Manitoba's teaching profession and the provincial government must reaffirm their dedication to the public school system and ensure that it truly becomes a mechanism for advancing equality of opportunity.

46

Madeline Hunter, "The Teaching Process," in The Teacher's Handbook, eds. D.W. Allen, E. Seifman (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Company, 1971), p. 147.

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