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## Editorial.

### Denominational Schools.

#### THE STRUGGLE IN MANITOBA.

The question of denominational *versus* undenominational schools is one that has been bitterly fought in nearly every Province in the Canadian Confederation. It has been, and is yet, a subject of warm contention among our neighbors across the lines. The cause of this appears to be in the fact that many Roman Catholics are at variance with the great Protestant majority regarding the objects for which schools are established. The former regard the school, in addition to the objects given below, as a branch of the Church, in fact, call it "the child's Church," and make the teaching of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church an integral part of the ordinary work of the school. The latter view the school as an establishment whose chief object is to impart secular instruction, and to develop the intellectual and moral faculties.

In Ontario the Separate School agitation first engaged attention about 1840, and in rather more than the ensuing decade the Legislature adopted as many as five Acts or amendments affecting the Separate Schools. But dissatisfaction still existed, and after a violent controversy the Roman Catholic Separate School Act of 1855 was passed. In the course of a few years, the Act was denounced, and the Bill known as "Scott's amended Separate School Act" was introduced in 1860, pressed with modifications each time, in 1861 and 1862, and finally passed in 1863. Agitation was again resumed in 1865, but it appears to have been chilled by the following published statement of Dr. Rycerson:—

"If, therefore, the present Separate School law is to be maintained as a final settlement of the question, and if the Legislature finds it necessary to legislate on the Separate School question again, I pray that it will abolish the Separate School law altogether; and to this recommendation I am forced, after having long used my best efforts to maintain and give the fullest and most liberal application to successive Separate School Acts, and after twenty years' experience and superintendence of our Common School system."

Since 1865 the question has lain at rest in Ontario. Supporters of R. C. Separate Schools are exempted from taxation for Public School purposes, and they are vested with ample powers for the collection of their own rates.

In the Province of Quebec, after much discussion the law was framed (1860) so that the minority in religion in any municipality may dissent, and establish Dissident Schools, the trustees of such schools having the same powers as the Commissioners have in respect of Common Schools. Religious teaching is acknowledged as a distinctive feature of the Quebec system. In the schools that are not Roman Catholic, Protestant ministers are expected to give the religious teaching.

In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the Separate School agitation failed to accomplish as much as in Ontario and Quebec, but a compromise was effected which, if carried out in good faith, should prove satisfactory. In Roman Catholic Sections, legally certificated teachers of the same faith are to be appointed. Religious instruction may be given, but not within legal school hours.

In New Brunswick feeling had run too high to admit easily of giving the law a fair trial. During such seasons unwarrantably strong assertions are apt to be made, and the makers stand by them even at a sacrifice. Winners rancorously press their gains, and losers give unnecessary and sometimes unreasoning opposition. Quite recently Bishop Sweeney permitted the seizure of his carriage to pay the Common School tax assessed on the Catholic Schools in the town of Portland, N. B.

Prince Edward Island was the next to undergo a severe conflict on this question. It was fought last year with great bitterness. The majority carried the undenominational system, but the struggle is hardly over yet, as the School Bill is now before the Legislature.

In Manitoba at the present time, the public question of greatest moment is whether the school system is to be "denominational" or "national." At present there is a Central Board of Education which resolves itself into "two committees, sections, one consisting of the Protestant, the other of the Roman Catholic members thereof, and the matters and things which by law belong to the Council are referred to the said committees respectively." Each committee licenses its own