

HISTORY OF MANITOBA

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The civilized era of Manitoba has only begun in the eighteenth century, but how long it may have been populated by the rude nations of centuries past will remain dim and vague to the present thriving Manitoba. The populous Mound Builders, who dwelt in peace over the wide prairies, were soon cut down by the fierce North American Indians. "The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and fierce," hunted the bison in their vast hunting-ground for many years before the white men endeavored to obtain the large tract of land in the Northwest, the Indians' hunting-ground. The prairies were given to the Hudson's



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Aged 12 Years.

Winner of the \$8 prize offered by The Western Home Monthly for the best and shortest History of Manitoba.

Bay Company in 1670 by Charles II. of England.

"Prince Rupert's Land," the name then given to the prairies, was very productive of fur-bearing animals. So valuable was the fur-trade the Company carried on that it did not wish the people of the eastern portions of Canada to gain knowledge of the fertility of the soil. But a few settlers had penetrated the wilds of Manitoba, and a small colony had been founded near the Red River junction, by the perseverance of Lord Selkirk in 1811. Some few years later the Canadian government took steps to get possession of the land held by the Hudson's Bay Co. The Canadian Government induced the British Parliament to pass an Act by which the Hudson's Bay territory could be surrendered to Canada on payment of the just claims of the Company. It was offered three hundred thousand pounds, one-twentieth of the land, and the right to retain their trading privileges, the offer being accepted.

Little or no thought, however, was given to the French Halfbreeds who had settled on the Red River banks, when taking possession of the country and making provision for its future government. When surveyors were sent out to inspect the country near Fort Garry, the Halfbreeds became alarmed lest they should be forced to give up their homes and land. No attempts to quiet their fears being

made, they became agitated under the influence of Louis Riel and M. Lepine, and broke out into open revolt, with these men as their leaders. When the Governor of the new province of Manitoba endeavored to enter it, he found his way barred by an armed force. The leaders of the rebellion now formed a Provisional Government, impressing all those supposed to be in sympathy with the Dominion Government. Riel, having a strong personal dislike of Thomas Scott, a brave, outspoken loyalist, had him seized, and, giving him the form of a trial, sentenced him to be shot, this being carried out in March, 1870, under circumstances of great brutality. When news of it reached Ontario and Quebec, great was the excitement, and many hundreds of young men offered their services to go with General Wolseley to crush the rebellion. Those best fitted to endure hardships being chosen, they set out on the long, trying march to Fort Garry, only to find on arriving there the rebels scattered and everything quiet.

The same year, 1870, the Manitoba Act was passed. It defined the limits of Manitoba, and stated how it was to be governed. Its form of government is similar to that of Ontario; and, like Ontario, it decided to do without a "second chamber" or legislative council. It was given the right to send four members to the House of Commons, and was allowed two Senators.

A serious dispute arose a few years later out of the fact that the Manitoba Legislature repealed (1890) an Act which allowed separate schools in that province and passed another that recognized no schools save those which are free and non-sectarian; the dispute being carried on between the Dominion and Manitoba. The right to have separate schools had been granted to the Manitoba Legislature in 1871, and the Roman Catholics, when this right was withdrawn, appealed to the Dominion Government for relief. A long and bitter struggle followed. The Dominion Government, under the leadership, first, of Sir Mackenzie Bowell, and subsequently of Sir Charles Tupper, endeavored to induce Manitoba to change its policy, but in vain. An

attempt to pass, by the Dominion Government, a Coercion Bill, proved a failure, and the matter became one of the chief issues in the general elections of 1896. The elections resulted in the defeat of Sir Charles Tupper and party, who had advocated a policy of coercion, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who had favored conciliation, became Prime Minister of the Dominion. The struggle was brought to an end by Manitoba agreeing to permit religious instruction to be given after the regular hours of teaching.

Two years later the loyal sons of Manitoba were called upon to give their services to Great Britain, that country being involved in the Boer War. The war excited military enthusiasm and deep loyalty in the hearts of the young men, which was deepened by the death of our beloved Queen Victoria, and the ascension of the Prince of Wales and his consort, now Queen Alexandra. The following fall, the Duke and Duchess of York made their tour of Canada, passing through the province of the Dominion which is to-day among the foremost of the great wheat centres of the world.

"These are the gardens of the desert, these The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful, For which the speech of England has no name; The Prairies."

Such, indeed, must have been the emotions of the early settlers as they beheld them for the first. But honest toil has reduced "the blooming wilds," to cultivated acres where

"The low of herds
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
Over the dark brown furrows."

On these rich resources of soil depends the thriving city of Winnipeg, with its large, busy grain elevators, its mammoth railway yards, its extensive manufactures, its up-to-date stores, its paved streets and handsome residences; or the smaller, though scarcely less busy cities of Brandon and Portage la Prairie.

Manitoba, with her rich resources of soil, her increase of wealth and social refinement, her free systems of education and her excellent forms of government possesses that which should make her foremost among the provinces of our great Dominion.

The first lucifer match was made in 1829.

It is estimated that the war between Russia and Japan is costing \$3,000,000 a day.

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