

## COMPULSORY EDUCATION

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**Government Has Refused For Five Years in Succession to Pass Such a Measure—Educationalists and Public Bodies Declare Such a Law is Necessary.**

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For five successive sessions, beginning with 1906 and extending until 1910, the legislature of Manitoba, under the direction of the Roblin government, has refused to countenance the passage of a compulsory education act. In 1906, the Winnipeg School Board, concerned at the conditions which were developing in the city, prepared a bill providing for compulsory education, which was to apply only to cities and towns. The School Board vainly tried to get a member of the government side of the House to introduce the measure, meeting with refusals from both the member for South Winnipeg and the member for North Winnipeg. In both cases it was known that the members acted under instructions from the Roblin government.

In the session of 1907, the Attorney General was asked whether it was the intention of the government to bring in a compulsory education bill, and he replied that the government had doubts as to the constitutional powers of the province, and had submitted a series of questions to an eminent constitutional lawyer with a view to obtaining his advice. The matter was discussed to some extent during the provincial elections of 1907, and Mr. Roblin, speaking in the Walker Theatre, Winnipeg, advanced the argument that the province lacked the constitutional power to pass this legislation.

### **Resolution Voted Down in 1908.**

In 1908, at the first session of the new legislature, D. A. Ross, M.P.P., on behalf of the opposition, moved a resolution setting forth that in all civilized countries except Russia the attendance of children was compulsory at SOME school between certain ages, and that Manitoba had clearly the right to enact compulsory education by the wording of the judgment of the Privy Council in 1892:

"Therefore let it be resolved, That this House endorses the principle of compulsory education, and claiming, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, the right to enforce such, considers it desirable that the government should introduce the necessary legislation to prevent truancy and to enforce the compulsory attendance in cities, towns and incorporated villages, and for a limited period of the year in rural districts."

The resolution was opposed by Joseph Bernier, M.P.P. for St. Boniface, who, in a lengthy argument, denied the right of the province to pass such legislation, and by the Hon. R. P. Roblin, The premier, claiming that the passing