

there had been a large annual exodus to the eastern states of the Union. If this stream could be diverted to the northwest, the expectation would almost certainly be realized. The provision just quoted, therefore, was inserted for the benefit of those who might need its protection, and not as has often been said for the benefit of Catholics alone.

At the first session of the Manitoba Legislature (1871) a school act was passed providing for a system of schools suitable to the existing circumstances. It provided for a Board of Education, and a division of it, into two sections—Catholic and Protestant. The board as a whole had certain functions, but the chief part of the work was to be transacted by the sections. The system was improved from time to time, but always (until 1890) retained its chief characteristic of Catholic and Protestant schools. The geographical distribution of the people lent itself to the easy application of this division, for the English and French (save in the urban communities) were very largely congregated in different parts of the province. For nineteen years (until 1890) this happy state of affairs continued almost without a murmur. All but the veriest few were perfectly satisfied, and congratulations were frequently heard that divines who might, and sometimes did, preach against one another in the pulpit, met, nevertheless, at the same education board, at the openings and closings of schools and colleges, and elsewhere, and applauded, in matters relating to education, the efforts made by their pulpit opponents for the instruction of the young. Almost up to the moment of the overthrow of this system did the congratulations and applause continue, and their cessation was due, not to the people of Manitoba, but to certain circumstances which shall now be related.

The nineteen years just spoken of had witnessed great changes in the province. The French exodus to the eastern states had maintained its old direction, and absolutely refused to "go west." From Ontario, however, and from Sweden, Iceland, Russia, etc., a large emigration had arrived. The Catholics found themselves reduced from 50 per cent., to not more than 15 per cent. of the population. Their political influence, however, retained some of its importance, for in the keen struggle between Liberal and Conservative their vote might frequently turn the scale. In fact it did in one very notable instance decide a most important election; which election decided the fate of an administration; turned out the Conservatives brought in the Liberals; and led directly—to the repeal of the separate school system! The Catholic vote was, in the most scandalous fashion possible, exploited and applied to the overthrow and discomfiture of those whose franchises were sought by politicians who swore themselves their friends. We hesitate to