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THE MANITOBA SCHOOL QUESTION.

SO far as this question has been dragged into the politics of our country, it is not the province of the RECORD to follow it. So far as it stands related to our national life, and civil and religious liberty, it demands the careful consideration of all.

In this connection attention may be called to two points, may we not say *two errors*.

1. It is widely claimed that the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba, in asking for the restoration of separate schools, is only asking for the privilege accorded to the Protestant minority in Quebec.

The cases of Quebec and Manitoba are in no way parallel.

In Quebec, the majority, or rather the Church which controls the schools of the majority, uses its schools for teaching the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. The R. C. catechism is a chief text-book. The first and main thing sought in these schools is to make good Catholics. All other education is secondary. Moreover, a part of the instruction in the tenets of the R. C. Church is that the doctrines of all other Churches are dangerous, false, blasphemous.

To compel Protestants to support such schools, established for the purpose of opposing and destroying their most cherished beliefs, would be bringing into Canada something of the Middle Ages, when men had to worship with Rome or die.

The very fact that a majority in a free country is determined to use the schools of the country for teaching the catechism and creed of any particular church, makes it absolutely necessary that other churches should not be compelled to support them. This freedom is granted in Quebec, to the extent, that where there is a sufficient number of Protestants to form a dissentient school, and they make application to Government for that purpose, they are allowed the privilege, otherwise they must support the R. C. schools.

In Manitoba the case is entirely different. The majority does not wish to teach the special doctrines of any church. The object for which its schools are established is to train the young in

knowledge that will fit them for being good citizens and it leaves to the parents and churches the work of training them for church membership. There is no hardship or unfairness in asking the Roman Catholic citizens to support the public school system, any more than in asking them as citizens to do their share of any public work that is for the equal benefit of all.

The position of parties in the two provinces is thus very different. In Quebec the majority demand that their schools shall teach Romanism, and they allow the minority, under certain conditions, to have separate schools. In Manitoba, the majority provide schools that will fit all the young people for being good citizens, but demand that these schools shall not be used for advancing the special interests of Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, or any other denomination. They claim that churches should do their own special work, which the Roman Catholics are as free to do as any other.

If there were no separate schools in Quebec the minority would have to support schools which exist for the express purpose of opposing and overthrowing all other denominations. In Manitoba the minority is not asked to support schools which exist for the purpose of opposing Rome, or for upbuilding any other denomination, but national schools, which teach no catechism and discredit the religious beliefs of no denomination.

The Roman Catholics of Manitoba have the same privileges that the Presbyterians or Episcopalians, or Methodists, or Baptists, of Manitoba, have; the privilege of getting a good education for their children in the public schools, without having their religious beliefs interfered with, and the privilege of giving their children instruction in their own catechisms in whatever way they may think best, outside the public schools.

The cry for fair play is widely echoed. Fair play demands that Roman Catholics get the same privileges that other denominations do, no less, no more. At present they have that fair play in Manitoba, instruction on equal terms in all other matters, and equal liberty to instruct their children in their own catechism.