

The Manitoba Act, which constituted the province, was shaped considerably by the events of the Riel rebellion, but this is not the place to speak of the peculiar influences which brought about the form of the educational clauses of that Act. One of these was (speaking of the laws which the Province might pass on education): "Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools, which any class of persons have by law or practice in the Province at the Union."

In 1871 the Legislature of Manitoba at its first session passed an Act providing that a Board, half Protestant, the other half Catholic, should have control of Common School Education. The management of the Protestant schools was given entirely to the Protestant section; that of the Catholic schools, to the Catholic section. This led to the introduction of a system of non-sectarian religious instruction in the Protestant schools, and left the Catholic section to give whatever religious instruction they might choose in their schools. This Act of 1871 was amended from time to time, until a thoroughly organized system of Catholic separate schools became established by 1884.

During all these years dissatisfaction with the separate school feature of education had prevailed in the minds of the increasing Canadian population of Manitoba, until in 1890 the Greenway-Martin government passed their celebrated Educational Acts. Under the "Public Schools Act," one system of education, without separate schools, was established. Another Act, the "Department of Education Act," established the members of the Cabinet as the Department, having control of finances, making all appointments of inspectors, normal school teachers and the like, and fulfilling all the functions of an executive. This Act also established an Advisory Board of seven educational experts, four members being appointed by the Government, two chosen by the teachers of the Public Schools, and one appointed by the University of Manitoba. This Board by the Act has supreme power as to curriculum of study, text books.