

Schools and Religion.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF MANITOBA.

By REV. PROFESSOR GEORGE BRYCE, LL.D., Winnipeg, Member of the
Advisory Board.

Manitoba as a province was organized in 1870. It was in some respects the child of an older civilization. On the banks of Red River, a settlement had grown, having its beginnings in 1804, when Fort Gibraltar was built by the Nor'-West Company at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Near this fort a few half-breed voyageurs settled. In 1812-15 Lord Selkirk's Highland colonists reached Red River by way of Hudson's Bay and settled near the forks under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Passing through many trials the Red River settlement grew. In 1818 two Roman Catholic priests reached the colony, and began a school, out of which grew St. Boniface College. In 1820 the first Church of England minister came to the settlement from England. Schools and churches were begun by him and his successors as they were needed. In 1851 the first Presbyterian minister found his way to the Selkirk Colony, and organized congregations and began schools.

In 1870 the Red River Settlement and a portion of the adjoining territory of Rupert's Land was formed by the Canadian Parliament into the Province of Manitoba. There were churches and schools under the three bodies named—Roman Catholics, Church of England, and Presbyterians. The population numbered about 12,000; about one-half Roman Catholic, three-eighths Church of England, and one-eighth Presbyterian. The Settlement was divided up into parishes, each parish having a church and school of the prevailing denomination. The schools were, however, either purely church organizations or at the most voluntary schools. No government or municipal grant was given them.