

EXTRACT from a Report of the Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency on the 26th July, 1894.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had under consideration a memorial addressed to Your Excellency in Council by His Eminence Cardinal Taschereau, Archbishop of Quebec, and by the Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops in Canada on the subject of the laws relating to education in the province of Manitoba and in the North-west Territories.

The memorial sets forth the condition of the public schools in the province of Manitoba from the establishment of that province until 1890 and proceeds to state that: "In 1890 laws were passed changing the school system and replacing it by other enactments which are, for a portion of the community, a source of grief, regret and hardship." The memorial asserts that: "The result of the new system is purely and simply the legal suppression of all Catholic schools and the maintenance of all Protestant schools, with all the rights and privileges they enjoyed previous to the school laws of 1890," and that the "Catholic ratepayers have now to help to the support of Protestant schools which are exactly what they were, and to which, naturally, Catholic parents cannot conscientiously send their children."

The memorial proceeds to state, in detail, some of the provisions of the enactments of Manitoba of 1890 which are claimed to have the effect previously stated.

It further states that "For the last four years the Catholics of Manitoba have been subjected to the unfair and unjust treatment resulting from the change in the school laws of 1890"; that "They asked in vain for relief; instead of a remedy they have been made the victims of a fresh injustice in the new Manitoba law, 57 Victoria, chapter 28, assented to on March 2nd, 1894," one of the provisions of which forbids aid be given by any municipality to any school not conducted according to the school system adopted in 1890. The effect of this enactment is stated by the memorialists to be "That no municipality, even one exclusively Catholic, without a single Protestant in its limits, has any power to levy a single dollar for Catholic schools, while a Catholic municipality where there are ten Protestant children is obliged by law to levy on all the Catholics, as well as on the parents of the ten Protestant children the money required for the education of the ten Protestant children."

The memorial complains also that the enactment of 1894 "Decreases the confiscation of all school property in all the districts which do not submit their schools to the new law" even though the school property may have been acquired by Catholics with their own money.

The memorial further states that in the North-west Territories, "The Catholic separate schools have been retained, but in virtue of the ordinance number 22, of 1892, they are deprived of their liberty of action and of the character which distinguishes them from other schools," and that there, as well as in Manitoba, the result is very detrimental to the cause of education and really has, in both cases, created bad feelings, dissensions, and the most deplorable results." It adds that "The painful experience of the Catholics of Manitoba and of the North-west Territories is also resented by all the Catholics of the Dominion," and has excited sympathy "among many Protestants who, though separated by faith are united with the Catholics in a sentiment of justice and fair play and the desire of the prosperity of their common country."

The memorialists make reference to the many claims to gratitude which Catholic missionaries have established by their work in times past, in connection with Christian missions, and in spreading civilization as well as religion throughout what are now the British possessions in North America, and in encouraging sentiments of loyalty to British rule and British institutions when those possessions came under the British flag; and they seem (properly in the view of the committee) to consider that these circumstances give a strong claim for generous recognition of the rights of Catholics in Manitoba and the North-west. They also refer to the fact: "That the Federal Parliament has endowed the schools of Manitoba and the North-west with a large domain, in assigning to the support of such schools the eighteenth part of all public lands." They cite the promise made to the inhabitants of Manitoba and the North-west Territories when