

## Manitoba School Case.

Whereof the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Manitoba for the time being, and the legislature of the said province, and all persons whom it may concern, are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

JOHN J. MCGEE,

*Clerk of the Queen's Privy Council of Canada.*

The privileges which by the said order we are commanded to restore to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens are substantially the same privileges which they enjoyed previously to the year 1890. Compliance with the terms of the order would restore Catholic Separate Schools with no more satisfactory guarantees for their efficiency than existed prior to the said date.

The educational policy embodied in our present statutes was adopted after an examination of the results of the policy theretofore followed under which the Separate Roman Catholic schools (now sought to be restored) had existed for a period of upwards of 19 years. The said schools were found to be inefficient. As conducted under the Roman Catholic Section of the Board of Education they did not possess the attributes of efficient modern public schools. Their conduct, management and regulation were defective; as a result of leaving a large section of the population with no better means of education than was thus supplied, many people grew up in a state of illiteracy. So far as we are aware there has never been an attempt made to defend these schools on their merits, and we do not know of any ground upon which the expenditure of public money in their support could be justified.

We are therefore compelled to respectfully state to Your Excellency in Council that we cannot accept the responsibility of carrying into effect the terms of the Remedial Order.

Objections upon principle may be taken to any modification of our educational Statutes which would result in the establishment of more sets of separate schools. Apart, however, from the objections upon principle there are serious objections from a practical educational standpoint. Some of these objections may be briefly indicated:

We labour under great difficulties in maintaining an efficient system of primary education. The school taxes bear heavily upon our people. The large amount of land which is free from school taxes and the great extent of country over which our small population is scattered present obstacles to efficiency and progress.

The reforms effected in 1890 have given a strong impetus to educational work, but the difficulties which are inherent in our circumstances have constantly to be met. It will be obvious that the establishment of a set of Roman Catholic schools, followed by a set of Anglican schools and possibly Mennonite, Icelandic and other schools, would so impair our present system that any approach to even our present general standard of efficiency would be quite impossible. We contemplate the inauguration of such a state of affairs with very grave apprehension. We have no hesitation in saying that there cannot be suggested any measure which, to our minds, would more seriously imperil the development of our province.

We believe that when the remedial order was made, there was not available then to Your Excellency in Council full and accurate information as to the working of our former system of schools.

We also believe that there was lacking the means of forming a correct judgment as to the effect upon the province of changes in the direction indicated in the order.

Being impressed with this view, we respectfully submit that it is not yet too late to make a full and deliberate investigation of the whole subject. Should such a course be adopted, we shall cheerfully assist in affording the most complete information available. An investigation of such a kind would furnish a substantial basis of fact upon which conclusions could be formed with a reasonable degree of certainty.

It is urged most strongly that upon so important a matter, involving, as it does, the religious feelings and convictions of different classes of the people of Canada and the educational interests of a province which is expected to become one of the most important in the Dominion, no hasty action should be taken, but that, on the contrary, the greatest care and deliberation should be exercised and a full and thorough investigation made.