

It is argued that a changed concept of national unity, which recognizes the value of a multi-ethnic, multicultural Canadian society, is the basis on which educational provisions for minority groups should be developed. The historical survey of minority group schooling notes that the earlier provisions which afforded protection — at least for elitist minority groups — gave way to schooling programs more aimed at the integration and assimilation of minority groups. An ideal more generous than either of these uses of schooling is proposed.

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Minority Group Schooling and Canadian National Unity

One of the major tests of the strength and the tolerance of a democratic community is its treatment of minority groups. In dealing with the topic assigned, namely, “do educational provisions for minority groups strengthen or weaken Canadian National identity?”, two preliminary remarks are in order before proceeding with an overview of this interesting and important subject. First, we must consider not only the kind of “educational provisions” envisaged but also the precise objectives it was intended these provisions should achieve. Some educational provisions do not accomplish their goals; others achieve their objectives more effectively than had been believed possible. Secondly, it will be necessary to have a definition of Canadian nationalism. Canadian national identity as we understand it generally today was alien to the thought of generations of Canadians who preceded us. For many of our predecessors, Canadian identity was a much more local identity — an Ontario Britishness, a Maritime Loyalism, a Highland Scots or French-Canadian survivalism. Rarely was it the Pan-Canadianism we have today encompassing diversity, multi-ethnicity, bilingualism, and so forth.

I propose to examine a selection of educational provisions for minority groups at two different periods in our history — first, the past experience, the historical background, when the minorities to be protected were often the dominant elitist groups; secondly, the more recent experience with minority groups when the minorities are seen in the context of integration and assimilation. The earliest minorities in the Maritimes after the conquest of 1713 were the Acadians and the ruling British Anglican elite. The first minority in Canada after the conquest of 1759 was the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant minority. Immigration from the rebellious American colonies and from the British Isles tended to further aggravate the problem of minorities. The earliest educational legislation in the British North American colonies

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was conceived in terms of protecting the elite, and so doing in terms of the noblest national virtues. On the other hand, some demands for minority schools in the nineteenth century may be seen as detracting from national unity and encouraging elements of divisiveness or separatism. It is often forgotten that the British and Loyalists were the first separatists in Canadian history and that they won a special independent status for themselves in 1791 although they were a minority! An even more special case, worthy of attention, is the special treatment accorded groups considered unassimilable. Some attention will also be given to the provisions made for immigrant groups on the Prairies, and finally, a statement regarding the present situation and how public schooling and multiculturalism are compatible components in solidifying national unity.

I am taking minority groups in the sense of linguistic, religious and ethnic minorities, but it should be noted in passing that other types of minorities might be considered. Girls were long a minority in the school system, even if not in the total population. The children of the lower classes were long a minority in the early schools, and in numerous instances one could single out the rural backwoods communities. Governor James Douglas of Vancouver Island, to cite but one example, thought of common schools as suitable for rudimentary education of the children of the lower classes . . . much as shops were viewed as suitable for slow learners in a more recent age, and as agricultural, domestic science and vocational courses are still viewed in some quarters as particularly suitable for Indian and Metis children. In 1851, Douglas recommended as follows:

In regard to the character of the Teachers, I would venture to recommend a middle-aged couple for each school, of strictly religious principles, capable of giving a good sound English education and nothing more, these schools being intended for the children of the labouring and poorer classes; the children of promising talents, or whom their parents wish to educate further, may pursue their studies and acquire the other branches of knowledge at the (Hudson Bay) Company's school . . .¹

It is not on this type of social group that attention is here concentrated, although Douglas did have political and economic motives in mind in promoting education because, as he said, it was essential for Britain and the Hudson's Bay Company "to give a proper moral and religious training to the children of the settlers who are at present growing up in ignorance, and the utter neglect of their duties to God and to Society". Each must be sufficiently educated, but no more, to fit him for the place in society in which it had pleased God to place him. In other words, Douglas was not about to displease Divine Providence by promoting upward social mobility!

Having indicated that the minority groups I shall be dealing with are linguistic, religious and ethnic minorities, I should also clarify that the educational provisions we are about to consider were usually designed with a socio-political objective in mind. Precisely what did colonial administrators, and later provincial politicians, expect of schools? An early, and not untypical, statement of purpose is afforded in Lt. Governor Fanning's speech at the opening of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island in 1790:

Sensible as we all must be of the rapid improvement of the agriculture, the success of our

fisheries, the extension of commerce, and the increase of our inhabitants in this Island, it now becomes my indispensable duty in obedience to His Majesty's Royal Instructions, 'to recommend to you the expediency of entering upon some methods for the erecting and maintaining of schools in order to the training up of youth to reading and to the necessary knowledge of the principles of religion and virtue' . . . Give him (the child) then, early instruction and while he is young, season his mind with the maxims of virtue, teach him science and his life will be useful, teach him religion and his death shall be happy.²

That Canada was British in every sense of the word was held by many educators in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century as self-evident truth. Educational provisions were designed to assimilate the foreigner, to assert the Anglo-Celtic dominance. Social Darwinism, militant Protestantism (often of an Orange flavour), the belief in Nordic superiority, and a conviction concerning the special mission of the British Empire converged to give God-fearing, socially responsible, and politically aware educators a sense of direction and of urgency in the pursuit of their objectives. Numerous journal articles of the 1890's indicated this context:

When God created the heaven and the earth He gave to every living creature some weapon to repel its assailants, and those creatures which made use of those weapons, and fought for their existence survived the longest. The little English sparrow is an example of this.

The author went on to indicate how French-Canadians had no hope of surviving, and concluded:

" . . . English is destined to be the language of this continent . . . The Tricolour can have no part or lot in this country's government."³

There were those who were more generous in their attitude towards their French-speaking compatriots. Yet the highest praise that Arthur Buller, Lord Durham's commissioner of inquiry into education in Lower Canada, could give to the Catholic Church centred on its role in perpetuating British political principles. He wrote:

It is impossible to pay too high a tribute to the merits of this most exemplary Church. Its existence has ever been beneficially felt and its career has been marked throughout by the most faithful discharge of its sacred duties, and the most undeviating allegiance to the British Crown.⁴

There was no doubt in the mind of George W. Ross, responsible for public education in Ontario in the years following 1885, that the school system should and could strengthen Canadian nationalism. Indeed, he believed a unified school system or a uniform curriculum could pave the way away from provincial particularism and towards a strong united nation. He proposed such an objective to the Dominion Educational Association at its first convention held in Montreal in 1893:

The questions we ask ourselves today is: Are we going to be provincial in our education or are we going to be national? . . . let us try and do what the politicians have not yet done, — what the public sentiment of this country has not yet done, viz: to bind together the twenty thousand teachers of Canada . . . and through them declare to the world that Canada is not divided into provincial ideas, but that the sentiments of the provinces are united into one harmonious whole.⁵

To preach this type of Canadian unity in school was one thing — but obvious social realities were another matter. Cultural dualism, regional disparities,

provincial particularism, ethno-centric diversity, local pride and identification remained. As Filtreau asked in more recent times — what is the Canadian nation?

“Le Canada est un état politique, pas une nation, mais un consortium de nationalités.”

So much for the convictions of men regarding the efficacy of public schooling in achieving the political and social objective of national unity.

Let us turn now to examples from our past to see how this belief was acted upon in specific circumstances.

One of the earliest examples of special school provisions being granted with the objective of furthering nationalism — British North American allegiance in this case — and promoting assimilation of an obdurately particularist people was the creation of French schools for Acadians in conjunction with a plan to settle Protestants from the Montbéliard region of southern France among them in the hope of converting the Acadians.⁷ This plan of 1748 failed because the Huguenots, or French Protestants, preferred to remain in Lunenburg, or else relocated later at Tatamagouche and River John, both well removed from the Acadian area of settlement.

The example cited is one in which a minority was to be assimilated and integrated in the name of national unity. Here are a few examples of the fear in the British American colonies of being themselves absorbed, assimilated or unduly integrated into the powerful, republican American society to the south. When Jacob Mountain, Anglican bishop of Quebec, arrived in Canada in 1793 he was alarmed by the backward state of educational provisions for the British minority in the recently conquered colony and he warned the Colonial Office:

The almost inevitable necessity which will thus be imposed upon the higher orders of Society to send Children to the United States for the completion of their education is pregnant with alarming mischiefs.”

The litany of fear of American malevolent influences continued. As the “higher orders of Society”, the élitist minority, employed the argument of special school provisions so did the disadvantaged minorities. In 1802, Governor Wentworth of Nova Scotia received a request from the Rev. Edmund Burke, recently appointed Vicar General in that colony, for the creation of a system of schools for the Catholic minority. Burke argued, unsuccessfully — he was not granted the necessary funds — along nationalistic lines that such an organization was essential to the Catholics who were

... under the necessity of sending their children either to Countries where the Laws and Languages are different from ours, or to the United States where principles inimical to our constitution are profoundly taught and impressions made which are with difficulty if ever effaced...⁹

In the 1820's, in Upper Canada, the first Catholic bishop of the province, Alexander Macdonell, fearing the Anglican influence of the common schools on Catholic children and fearing even more the American influence on their patriotism, campaigned for publicly-subsidized Gaelic schools. He permitted his priests to teach in such public schools in an effort to guaran-

tee both the patriotic and religious convictions of the youth. This is an important example of a special provision for a minority group designed to foster nationalism, especially of an anti-American bias. Precisely the same kind of attitude was found at the same period at Red River colony where the Earl of Selkirk instructed the governor

... pick out from among the settlers a steady young man of a cool temper to be employed as a schoolmaster. Arithmetic with reading and writing in their native tongue (Gaelic) are the branches to be first attended to and I care not how little the children are taught of the language of the Yankies.¹⁰

Governor Miles Macdonnell later explained that a double barrier to American influences had been envisaged — the barrier of language and also the barrier of a dominant religion —

The leading motive of my first undertaking the management of that arduous tho laudable enterprise was to have made the catholic religion the prevailing faith of the establishment, should Divine Providence think me a worthy instrument to forward the design. The Earl of Selkirk's liberal mind readily acquiesced in bringing along with me the first year a priest from Ireland.¹¹

The similarity between the experiments in Upper Canada and Red River colony are noteworthy.

There can be no doubt that Bishop Macdonnell envisaged the church schools under his jurisdiction in Upper Canada as seminaries of patriotism and religion. In 1838 he went so far as to require all Catholic seminarians in the province to take the following oath, on pains of expulsion in case of refusal to swear:

I do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria as Lawful Sovereign of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of this Province of Upper Canada, dependent and belonging to the said kingdom — and that I will defend her to the utmost of my power against all traitorous conspiracies or attempts whatsoever which shall be made against her Person, Power and Dignity, and that I will do my utmost endeavours to disclose and make known to Her Majesty and her heirs and successors all treason and traitorous conspiracies and attempts which I shall know to be against her or any of them, and all this I do swear without any equivocation, mental evasion or secret reservation and renouncing all persons and dispensations from any Person or Power whatsoever to the contrary. So help me God.¹²

The requirement was reminiscent of the oath required by the French revolutionaries of the juring clergy.

On the other hand, the activities of bishop Macdonnell in the sphere of education can also be viewed as contributing to a weakening of national unity. When he appealed to Rome for European priests and teachers for the Kingston diocese he found that the Quebec bishops had blocked effectively his move by informing the British Government and the Vatican that Quebec had sufficient priests and that priests from old France, in particular, were most unsuitable for the Canadian church. It was Cardinal Weld who finally informed Macdonnell that the Gaelic and Indian missions schools in Upper Canada would have to forego European personnel since the French-Canadians were unwilling to have immigrant clergy and lay teachers dilute the apostolic zeal and contaminate the doctrinal purity, i.e. the ultra-monta-

nism, of the Canadian church.¹³

Similarly, there were those who argued that a system of confessional public schools — whether denominational, dual confessional, or separate dissentient schools — would divide the nation, dissipate its sense of community and erode allegiance to queen and country. Joseph Howe argued forcefully in Nova Scotia in 1856 against separate schools as divisive and contrary to the best interests of the state:

An attempt was made . . . to destroy the Common School system of this country — to sow religious dissention — to starve poor schoolmasters, already poorly paid — to break up and remove the common platforms upon which Protestants and Catholics had stood in harmony and good fellowship for years.¹⁴

That same year, a quarrel had erupted in neighbouring Prince Edward Island over a similar issue. The chief inspector, John Stark, had waxed too exuberant at the opening of the Normal School on the subject of daily Bible readings — a concession to some over-zealous Protestants — and as relations worsened between the Inspector and the government he was dismissed. Stark's personal and political friends accused the government of indecent conduct in having "stripped Stark naked", a pointed political pun that drew the following rejoinder from the Charlottetown *Examiner*:

A justification of such a course may be found in the fact that, previously of his dismissal, Mr. Stark was 'dressed in a little brief authority', and having stepped out of that by his own voluntary act, he cannot occupy a much more awkward position than he did before the public gaze.¹⁵

In the early nineteenth century the recognition of Nonconformist schools in Nova Scotia was regarded by the governing élite as a measure certain to weaken the loyalty of that immigrant population. The Legislative Council, "twelve old ladies, one in lawn sleeves" as T.C. Haliburton described it, felt it was discharging its duty to the Crown in blocking the bill to incorporate Pictou Academy. Haliburton was bitter in his comments when his appropriation bill was rejected:

They consist of twelve dignified, deeply read, pensioned old ladies, but filled with prejudices and whims like all other antiquated spinsters . . . I went to their board of green cloth to ask their opinion of my school bill . . . One of the old ladies who was dressed in black told me she had read of the blind leading the blind and saw no objection to the poor teaching the poor . . . that if education was not worth purchasing it was not worth having, and the poor would never know its value until they ascertained its price . . . Such, sir, was my reception, at what I will call the hospital of invalids. I never liked petticoat government and this completed my distaste for it.¹⁶

What the Legislative Councillors, and Bishop John Inglis in particular, wished to preserve was an élitist type of education capable of producing the leaders required in a loyal British colony. A decade later the various opposition groups had carried the day — Dalhousie, Acadia, Mount Allison and St. Mary's sputed forth, prompting Bishop Inglis to remark:

. . . this playing at universities is rather contemptible and although each has legislative endowment it will always be wasted by division into many small parts. One good result will I think arise, we shall be left at peace in Windsor and thank God we have still preserved the institution in that it is a fit place for the education of the sons of Churchmen.¹⁷

There are some minority groups which have been regarded as unassimi-

lable, as incapable, or even unworthy, of being integrated into national life. Special schools have been instituted in these cases to maintain a segregation deemed beneficial to the general public and in the best interests of the minority itself. Negro separate schools were instituted in Nova Scotia as early as 1784; by 1822 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel appealed to the Anglican bishop to support these schools noting that "colored children were excluded from other schools because whites would not allow their children to mix with them."¹⁸ The bishop did not respond very positively because, in his own words, "the blacks are a peculiar people, altogether a miserable set." That racial segregation in schools was imposed by the white majority and that it had hardened into legally sanctioned discrimination is evident from the Legislative Assembly debates of 1884 which recorded the following appeal:

A petition of George Davis and others, was presented by Mr. Harrington, and read, setting forth that they are coloured citizens and ratepayers of the City of Halifax, that by a minute of the Council of Public Instruction passed in December, 1876, all colored children were from henceforth excluded from the Common Schools, and separate schools were established for their use, which are of an inferior grade, and in which they do not receive equal advantages with children attending the Common Schools, for which and other reasons, as detailed in the petition, they pray that such minutes of Council be repealed.¹⁹

The legislation of 1918 continued the practice, but in 1960 a movement to abolish separate Negro schools was launched. At present only one such school remains unintegrated.

Negro separate schools were given statutory recognition in Ontario in 1849 and not until 1965 did the last Negro separate school close its doors. A law case defined the motivation inspiring this segregation:

Upon review of the several statutes, we are of the opinion that the separate schools were authorized as the defendants have suggested out of deference to the prejudices of the white population — prejudices which the Legislature evidently, from the language which they used, disapproved of and regretted, and which arises perhaps, not so much from the mere fact of difference of colour, as from an apprehension that the children of the coloured people, many of whom have but lately escaped from a state of slavery may be in respect to morals and habits unfortunately worse trained than the white children are in general, and that their children might suffer from the effects of bad example. It can hardly be supposed that the Legislature authorized such separate schools under the idea that it would be more beneficial or agreeable to the coloured people to have their children taught separately from the whites . . .²⁰

Other court cases made it clear that Negro children were required to attend only such segregated institutions, where provided, and that the white population could petition for the creation of such separate schools for Negro children even when the Negro ratepayers did not want such an institution.

The experience of the Canadian-born Japanese (Nisei) also illustrates clearly attitudes adopted towards a group considered unassimilable and undesirable. Limited in their immigration possibilities and then limited in their citizenship rights, the Nisei were denied such common rights as voting, serving in the armed forces, membership on school boards, and jury service. Formal government orders barred them from employment by government contractors; they were excluded from the professions of law and pharmacy

and were limited in fishing and lumbering. The British Columbia Board of Retail Merchants in Canada in petitioning the first Mackenzie King administration declared that Oriental exclusion "is in fact a struggle of far deeper significance in which home, family and citizenship considerations outweigh mercenary motives"; Premier MacLean told an Ottawa audience in 1927 that British Columbians "had no complaint against the individual Oriental . . . but it was a question of preserving the British white race"; Conservative M.P., J.A. Clark (Burrard), told parliament in 1922 "we cannot assimilate the yellow races, nor as a matter of fact, any coloured race."²¹ One prolific writer said,

British Columbia is one of the last frontiers of the white race against yellow and brown . . . It stands in the sea gate on the northwest Pacific, and holds it for Saxon civilization.²²

The situation was most often one in which the Nisei were anxious to integrate but the community was unwilling to assimilate them.

The first Nisei graduate of the University of British Columbia was forbidden to teach in British Columbia in 1916 so she went to Alberta; upon her return to her native province in 1931 she was still denied the opportunity to teach; therefore she opened a private school, a move widely acclaimed and approved by her own people:

. . . she has had the enterprise to go out and build for herself a whole school. Here again is an example of public spiritedness. Single-handed, she is contributing to the general welfare of the country of her birth. In the abetting of the assimilation of these new arrivals from Japan she is indirectly contributing to the cultural future of Canada.²³

Unfortunately, the majority held quite different views. The legislature ordered a survey of the period of 1922 to 1926 and noted with concern that "in three years the number of Japanese children in the public schools has increased 74 per cent while in the same time the number of white children has increased by 6 per cent"²⁴ — neglecting to add, however, that these rather meaningless statistics meant there were now only 2,477 Japanese children to approximately 100,000 others in the public school system! The Keenleyside inquiry on Orientals in Canada (1940), just prior to the outbreak of war in the Pacific, concluded that "the greatest potential source of danger is not disloyalty on the part of the Japanese . . . but the animosity of white Canadians against the Japanese in general."²⁵ The unprecedented relocation of the Japanese Canadians during World War II created untold hardship and involved countless injustices. The British Columbia Security Commission had made a military decision and it expected the provincial government to assume a share of responsibility for the continuing education of the displaced children. The provincial government flatly refused to assume any responsibility whatever and therefore the Commission had to make other plans and assume some financial responsibility.²⁶ Elementary schools were opened in makeshift quarters and with almost wholly inexperienced teachers. The press reported:

Over fifty young Nisei, nearly all of whom are girls, will tackle the problem of how to become a teacher in five days next week. A short concentrated course will be held . . . from next Monday to Friday at Hastings Park. From nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, the teacher-trainees will take voluminous notes on subjects such as 'Organization of

Class Routine, Supplies, etc.', 'Teaching English and Its Difficulties', 'Psychology of Handling Children and Classroom Presentation'.²⁷

At Tashma, a prerequisite for a teaching position in the relocation-centre elementary school was the signing of a repatriation paper to "return" to Japan.²⁸ Ironically, at the same time and in the same general region the provincial government was employing every means possible to compel Dukhobour children to attend school while excluding from public and high schools Japanese children who were eager to continue their education.

Similar to the experience of the Dukhobours was the experience of the first immigrants who populated the Canadian prairies — many of them Central Europeans who arrived during the Laurier-Sifton years by way of the CPR to settle in reserves and ethnic blocs. The public school was regarded in this context as a truly "national school", an agency proper for the assimilation of the immigrants' numerous children, an institution for the creation of a new social type — the Canadian. The Rev. George Bryce, in an address to the Manitoba College Literary Society in 1898, indicated the rationale of the common public school system and the role of "foreigners" within that system:

The Canadian national spirit declares the unity of the people to be essential. Mennonites, Icelanders, Hungarians, Jews and others will not be Canadians unless they are educated into the spirit of our land. Out of this grew our great public school movement of 1891. Shallow critics say it was a political move, that it was an expedient, that it was not wise. But that movement was inevitable. From time to time it had risen for the previous twenty years. It simply culminated in 1891.²⁹

This is an aspect of the Manitoba School Question that has too often been ignored. The Manitoba situation was somewhat unique after 1897 because a provision existed in public school legislation for bilingual instruction — a provision which the French, the Ukrainians (or 'Ruthenians' was what they were commonly called at the time), Poles and Germans utilized to maintain their ethnic cultures. Each group maintained its own normal school and the Department of Education made provisions for special teaching permits, inspection and textbooks.

There was some adverse public reaction and one Ukrainian teacher took the trouble to reply to a critical editorial in these terms in 1913:

. . . A state which attempts to transform all races subject to it into one nation with one language performs an unpatriotic act harmful to the whole state . . . To cut off a native language from a people is the same as cutting off a part of its soul.³⁰

There were at first two interpretations of the role of the bilingual school system: first, the official view that bilingual schools were a device, employed earlier in Ontario, to bring by gradual steps all children to English instruction; secondly, the minorities' view that primary education was to be in the mother tongue and more advanced education in English or French. Not until the First World War, however, was there a widespread opposition to bilingual schools in Manitoba. Much of this sentiment was fostered by Protestant clergymen acting through presbyteries, rural deaneries, women's institutes and Orange lodges. John W. Dafeo spearheaded a campaign through

the editorial pages of the *Manitoba Free Press* against “Balkanization” and the “Tower of Babel”, against inadequate English instruction and inappropriate civic attitudes, against the apparent willingness of the Roblin government to “betray the whole future of these Western Provinces, as English-speaking communities, for ten years more of autocratic rule”, and against the alleged plot of the Catholic archbishop to use “a compact Ruthenian organization . . . in bludgeoning reluctant governments.”³¹ Dafoe had launched the “trial by press” early in 1914 with the following warning:

There is . . . real danger that Canada may become . . . a multilingual country, inhabited by different peoples, speaking different tongues, and cherishing divergent national ideals. The most notable development of this national spirit has been among the Ruthenians; it is also at work among the Poles, and attempts are being made to arouse this feeling among the Germans.³²

This campaign, accelerated by a kind of war hysteria, attacked foreign tongues, foreign customs, “enemy aliens”, Catholics, Jews, Negroes, and alleged traitors and culminated in the repeal in 1916 of the bilingual provisions. Bilingual instruction which had been introduced in 1897 as a conciliatory measure to relieve racial and religious tensions, and which had been utilized to facilitate the integration of immigrant groups into the host society, was discarded for a centralized, unilingual school system in the name of national unity and good citizenship.

While Saskatchewan and Alberta never formally instituted bilingual public schools, they were forced, during an early period of contact and integration, to make informal concessions somewhat similar to the Manitoba experiment. The special training schools established at Regina and Vegreville were never intended to be teacher training institutions, although the Ukrainian community in particular attempted to obtain such a concession. Saskatchewan’s Director of Education among New Canadians told a national educational convention in Winnipeg in 1919:

The paramount factor in racial fusion is undoubtedly the school. It is the national melting pot. We must give it our undivided support. The great battle for better Canadian citizenship is being fought by our school teachers. They are the generals in the home field.³⁴

The Saskatchewan Department of Education launched a crusade to place model Anglo-Saxon teachers imbued with a missionary sense of service in each “foreign” community to act not only as instructors in correct English but also to inculcate ideas of personal cleanliness, impress the children with English dietary habits, encourage participation in sports, provide community leadership through picnics, concerts and patriotic rallies, and generally inculcate patriotic ideals in both the school and community. The Department’s expert observed that “the unqualified, half-Canadianized ‘foreign’ teacher cannot properly inculcate those ideas so essential in laying the foundation of true citizenship in Canada”. Dr. J.T. Anderson’s experience with the ethnic bloc settlement schools led him to the following conclusion:

It is surely manifest that the greatest agency in racial assimilation is the common or public school. This is the great melting-pot into which must be placed these divers racial groups, and from which will eventually emerge the pure gold of Canadian citizenship. For two outstanding reasons only the common school can accomplish the splendid work of racial

unification. In the first place the Church, the only other great socializing agency, stands divided, and, unfortunately denominational sects are prone to regard each other's activities with considerable suspicion; in the second place, the common school exerts its supreme influence over youthful minds at their most impressionable stage of development. In an efficient common school system, thoroughly efficient in every sense of the term, lies the satisfactory solution of this great national problem. For manifest reasons the elementary parochial school, with its disintegrating influence and elements of separatism, must also prove a detrimental factor in the achievement of this great end.³⁵

In Alberta there was much dissatisfaction with the Vegreville training school for foreigners. The Ukrainians, in particular, wished it to become a teacher-training institute for their ethnic community and when they were denied this they contrived to hire graduates from the Manitoba school for their community schools. An acrimonious battle ensued between the Department of Education and dissatisfied parents over the engagement of properly qualified teachers, school attendance and payment of school rates. The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported the views of Minister of Education, Hon. J.R. Boyle:

This is an English speaking province", said Mr. Boyle, "and every Alberta boy and girl should receive a sound English education in the public schools of the province."

Mr. Boyle added that there appeared to be an active organization among the Galicians to acquire control of the schools and have them conducted by Galician teachers in their own language. It was evident that strong measures on the part of the Department of Education would be required to keep control of the situation in the foreign settled districts.³⁶

Boyle was later to assert that English was the only language of the nation and the only language of instruction in the public schools of his province. Inspector Anderson's report a few years later remarked on the success of the government in dealing with the "great school revolt" and praised the qualified teachers "carrying on work according to English standards in in the English language." He added:

Official trustees are appointed where efficient local men cannot be found to manage the affairs of the schools, and this "immediate substitution of experience for inexperience in the solving of rural school difficulties" has largely been the cause of success in Alberta.³⁴

In other words, by the end of the First World War it had been settled that English would be the prevalent language of instruction in the single centralized education system of each of the Prairie provinces. Citizenship training would command an important place in what would soon be termed the Social Studies. The school was to be used effectively to achieve the objective of assimilating the multi-ethnic youth.

Perhaps a word about the special privileges granted to Hutterites is appropriate in the context of this paper. Hutterite schools are nearly always part of the public school system. What distinguishes them from other public schools is that they continue to be one-roomed rural schools in regions where larger units consolidate small schools, and that they continue to segregate Hutterite children from the general community. Equally important, is the fact that within the colonies there exists a centuries-old sectarian school system which effectively transmits the cultural heritage of the brotherhood. This "German school", as it is sometimes called, is one of the keys to Hutterian Brethren survival. As for the success of the "English school", or