DOMESTICATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS (1885-1905): THE ASSIMILATION INTENT OF ALBERTA'S SEPARATE SCHOOL SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION

Canadian society celebrates diversity. Many public school systems in Alberta claim to promote maximum individual freedom and multicultural pluralism—religious, philosophic, ethnic and linguistic diversity—within their schools. Yet the *model* of public school system that Alberta uses since it was forged as a province out of the Northwest Territories in 1905, was at least in part designed as an instrument of assimilation. Even the option for minority denominational schools within this system, grudgingly granted by the Protestant majority, was deliberately structured to "domesticate," that is, to control and shape the Catholics who refused to attend public schools. This paper examines the early history of the school system before Alberta became a province in 1905. It explores how this system dealt with diversity, the underlying, persistent problems and questions that arose around the role of schools in dealing with diversity, and the ideas and beliefs that were used to shape the proposed solutions.

The model of school system utilized in the Northwest Territories dramatically changed during this period (1885-1905). Initially, the Territorial government recognized the plurality of schools that existed and officially treated Protestant and Roman Catholic schools as two *equal* types of schools, a policy similar to the Quebec school policy of the time. Agitation by the Anglo-Protestant elite, however, led to a series of policy amendments that whittled away these equality provisions. Some groups opposed diversity in schooling so strongly that they sought to extinguish the educational rights of the Catholic minority. In the end, the Alberta Act (1905) solidified for Alberta the school model originally devised by Egerton Ryerson for Upper Canada (now Ontario). This model established a dominant public school system and a separate school system, both under the tutelage of the majority-controlled, provincial Department of Education.

This paper argues that although the current Alberta school system offers some relief to religious minorities, the policy framework for Catholic separate schools developed by 1905 was intended to control and ultimately assimilate the Roman Catholic (and initially French) minority. The paper argues that the inspiration of this model really lies with the older Constantinian idea of relating faith and state. Today, the Alberta school policy and structure continues to pressure Catholic schools to conform to many majoritarian educational beliefs.

Section one of this paper presents various models of school policy that were at one time or another adopted by Canadian provinces or earlier British North American colonies. The second section examines the history of the formation of the public school system in Alberta, as it moved from the early *dual confessional school model* (adopted 1884) to the state-controlled, *non-sectarian schooling with an option for minority denominational districts* (1905). Why did the leaders of the Northwest Territories choose to move in this direction? This section uncovers a series of basic issues and questions in school policy that are understood and addressed differently by people holding different visions of life. Section three focuses on the two major religious visions of life that influenced, not only the life of particular schools, but also the different *models* of school system and policy for the province. The paper concludes with some reflections on the implications of this early school struggle for contemporary plural Alberta.

CANADIAN MODELS OF SCHOOL POLICY

In *Public Schools & Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective*, Ronald A. Manzer sets out four basic models of arranging schools systems in relationship to religion that were developed in Canada. These models provide a valuable tool for grappling with the fundamental differences in how various colonial and provincial governments dealt with religion in public school policy. They help uncover the basic issues and questions that the conflicting communities answered differently.

Concurrent endowment of confessional systems

The central feature of this model is that churches or religious bodies played a primary role in directing the various school's administration and curriculum. When the state became involved in schooling through much-needed public funding, effective control was left in the hands of ecclesiastical hierarchies (Manzer 53). In Quebec after confederation, for example, a *dual confessional public school system* was developed in the cities of Montreal and Quebec City. The protestant system was on an equal footing with the Catholic system. Outside these cities, they developed a system of common schools based on the dominant religion in the area, with the possibility of "separate" schools for members of the other religion. The roots of this model were in the conquest of New France when Britain decided to allow the *Canadiens* to retain their own church, language, civil law and land tenure. These rights logically implied the control of schools as they were developed. English-speaking Protestants were soon granted the same privileges as the French. This policy was gradually worked out into a dual confessional school model.

Goresky describes the role of the state and churches in Quebec's system as it functioned during the 19th and the major part of the 20th century.

> In Quebec the government interferes in educational matters only to the extent of allocating grants to the two committees. The entire administrative machinery is under the control of the Department of Public Instruction, headed not by a responsible minister, but by a superintendent who is safe-guarded from political influences. This Superintendent is the president of the Council of Education which is divided into Protestant and Catholic Committees. Each Committee is supreme in the control of the money allotted to it towards education and in the administration of schools under its control. The local schools must be kept up by local effort, but again, the control is denominational. There is no fear of dispute between the two bodies as they have no contact. (36).

Newfoundland, when it joined Canada in 1949, brought with it another version of concurrent endowment of confessional system, that is, a *multi-denominational educational system* (Manzer 1994 54). This form of concurrent endowment of confessional systems historically allowed schools to be run by emergent religious groups, including, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Salvation Army, Seventh

Day Adventist, Pentecostal Assembles, and others. The schools were placed on an equal legal footing with one another, and religious bodies maintained authoritative control of significant aspects of the education system. In 1998 [?], the NFL school system was significantly altered to a non-sectarian public school system, taking away the existing rights of religious minorities that opposed this move.

Minority denominational districts

This model of school system was developed in Upper Canada, renamed Ontario after Confederation in 1867, by educational reformers. Its three central features are: "secular central governance, non-denominational common schools, and separate schools for denominational minorities" (Manzer 54-57). This model is currently functioning in Ontario: it is state-directed, allows separate Catholic schools, but has changed in that it no longer bases itself on non-denominational Christianity but rather on secularism. In 1884, the Northwest Territories school law was patterned explicitly on Quebec's model of "concurrent endowment of confessional systems." A series of amendments up to 1901, however, resulted in the gradual adoption of the Ontario model. At the formation of the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, both provinces adopted a form of non-sectarian public schooling with minority denominational districts.

De jure Non-sectarian, De Facto Reserved Public Schools

This model of school system was developed in the three maritime provinces when they officially forbade "sectarian practices such as teaching denominational doctrines and using denominational prayers and books." Non-sectarian Christianity was permitted. In practice, however, a compromise was worked out that allowed some schools to be reserved for Roman Catholics. They were permitted a number of sectarian practices, e.g. to employ members of religious orders, to wear their religious garb, and to hold Catholic religious exercises before or after regular school hours (Manzer 57-59). Religious minorities achieved some control over their own schools in this model when there were a significant sized groups that were concentrated in more or less isolated regions.

Non-sectarian Public Schools

In this model, the public schools were administered by a state department. Churches, religious orders, or clergy had no authoritative role in the schools (teachers, trustees, or inspectors) and were prevented from any sectarian engagement with the schools, such as instruction in religious dogma or creeds. The schools were originally assumed to encourage a general sort of Christianity and morality (Manzer 59-61). A liberal view of strict separation of church and state motivated this model. It was adopted by British Columbia in 1872. Manitoba started out with a system of concurrent confessional endowment, but abolished it in 1890 and adopted this model of non-sectarian public schools, a move that sparked off the Manitoba School Crisis.

These four models of school systems and policy were constructed during the conflicts over school systems during the 19th century. The various systems of beliefs and ideas which motivated these conflicts offered different answers to questions about the purpose of public education, the place of religion in the public school, and whether the church or state should exercise ultimate authority over education. These answers, in turn, rested on even more deeply held assumptions: What is human nature? What is the nature of society? What constitutes acceptable and unacceptable plurality within a society? How does the desire for unity relate to the reality of plurality within a society? What is the basis for unity, solidarity, and toleration within a society? How should plurality relate to the public and/or private realms? How and by what means should a society strive for unity? What is the distinctive role of the state in dealing with plurality and achieving unity?

Real-life people, guided by different ideas and beliefs, eventually shaped each of these differing models of school systems in their provinces. This paper now examines the critical conflicts and decisions that established the system of, and policy for, schooling in Alberta. When Alberta was still part of the Northwest Territories, its school system was set up as "concurrent endowment of confessional systems." This dual confessional structure was gradually transformed into a system of "non-sectarian state schools

with minority denominational districts." The next section draws out and examines the major issues and questions that arose in the historical debates over the transformation of the Alberta school system.

THE HISTORICAL STRUGGLE OVER SCHOOL SYSTEMS

In 1670, Great Britain gave the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) an economic monopoly over Rupert's Land, all of the territory draining into the Hudson's Bay. The HBC and its competitor the North West Company were united into one company in 1821, with their territory now including all British lands to the northwest of the colony of Canada. The HBC functioned as de facto government of this territory. It made minor efforts to establish schools but the first successful schools were run by Roman Catholic and Methodist missionaries working with and schooling Indians as well as some HBC employees. The HBC actively promoted missionary work and schooling after 1840. It eventually created an educational policy which assumed government ought to give some support to schooling but that "education is best administered by religious, not secular, authorities" (Chalmers 9).

The Hudson's Bay Company surrendered its monopoly position to the British government in 1869. The newly created Confederation of Canada was given Rupert's Land. In the interim, Louis Riel and his followers established a provisional government over the area of present southern Manitoba. On May 12, 1870, the Canadian Parliament passed the Manitoba Act creating the new province of Manitoba. Section 22 of the Act recognized the existing dual confessional system of schooling in the territory and guaranteed its continued existence. Carney reports:

> The dual system of church schools was officially recognized in the first school legislation passed in Manitoba in 1871. A 14-man board of education was established consisting of two equal sections, one Catholic, the other Protestant, with four Catholic priests and four Protestant ministers forming the majority in each section. One member was to be both the superintendent of education and secretary. Although the whole Board had certain responsibilities for the general organization of schools, each section, as in Quebec, had entire control of its own schools. It could appoint inspectors, prescribe curriculum, authorize texts, certify and train teachers. …the Act simply blessed the denominational balance which the missionaries had established and assumed the balance would continue (22).

A structure for the first Canadian government over the newly acquired territories beyond the province of Manitoba was provided by Parliament in the Northwest Territories Act, 1871. The new governing Council found schooling in the Territories was being done by Catholic and Protestant mission schools (Chalmers 3-10).[1] Up to 1884, the Territorial Council had little to do with these schools other than passing a few regulations and providing a minimal amount of funding. The mission schools were not transformed into an actual territorial school system. The education of Indians was initially a Territorial responsibility. Three federal treaties signed with Indian nations between 1871-1877 (and another affecting the territory of Alberta signed in 1899) passed native education into federal jurisdiction. By 1884, when the Territorial Government moved to officially establish a school system in the Territories, Indian education was clearly a national government responsibility (Sparby 25).[2]

In 1875, the federal Parliament debated an act giving the new Northwest Territories "the primary institutions of government." It created a Territorial Council that would be neither democratically elected nor function with 'responsible government.' The governor and five members of the Council were to be appointed by Ottawa. The Governor was responsible directly to the federal government in Ottawa. The Act made provisions for adding an elected member to the Council whenever an area of 1000 square miles achieved a population of 1000 people. When the elected membership of the Council hit 21, it would be

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[1] For the early history of Catholic schooling and mission schools in the Northwest Territories, see Carney 1992 pp. 21-24. Also see Michael Owen, "Brokers of Cultural Change: British Wesleyan Missionaries in Rupert's Land, 1840-1854," in Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek, eds., *Exploring our Educational Past*, Calgary: Detselig, 1992, 37-54.

[2] Harry Theodore Sparby, *A History of the Alberta School System to 1925*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1958.

replaced by a legislative assembly. The growing pressure for popular control of Territorial political institutions would increasingly dovetail with the growing pressure for majority control of schools through state institutions. At this time, however, the 1875 Act included Section 11 providing for "a dissentient or separate system of schools in the territories." (Carney 23) The section was not entirely clear on whether a dual confessional model or a non-sectarian state school system with minority denominational districts was preferred. The act easily passed in the Commons but met vigorous debate in the Senate and only passed by a narrow margin.

The first public school in present-day Alberta was erected in Edmonton in 1882. In this early Territorial setting, "public school" meant "a more formal type of organization in which the school was managed by some kind of citizens' committee and supported by public subscription" (Sparby 1958 25). Up to this time, schools in the Territories had been mission schools run by churches that received "some meager grants-in-aid from the government."[3]

Legislating a dual confessional model

In 1883, Frank Oliver[4] of Edmonton, who was the first elected member of the Territorial Council, introduced a bill to establish a *public school system*. He patterned this bill on the non-sectarian state schools with minority denominational districts model developed in Ontario (Gorkesky 34-35). The bill was withdrawn due to lack of time to study it and questions concerning the authority of the Council to pass such legislation. Oliver re-introduced his bill in the new session in 1884. Both Catholic Bishops Grandin of St. Albert and Taché of St. Boniface opposed this bill, fearing it "would frustrate clerical control and surveillance of Catholic schools" (Carney 23). Mr. Justice Rouleau, a Catholic appointed member of the council, presented the Bishop's concerns in the Council and introduced another bill designed to protect the educational rights of Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities. His bill proposed a central authority for schooling that was independent of the Territorial Government while Oliver's bill did not (Sparby 33).

The two bills were combined into a third bill which passed as "An Ordinance Providing for the Organization of Schools in the Northwest Territories," or the Ordinance of 1884. It differed from Oliver's bill in that it called for the establishment of a Board of Education that would be independent of government and composed of 6 Roman Catholic members and 6 Protestant members, as well as a secretary. The Board would "resolve itself into two sections, a Protestant and a Roman Catholic section. Each section was to have full control over education of its own constituents--curriculum, training and qualifications of teachers, appointment of school inspectors" (Chalmers 13-14). The N.W.T. Ordinance, 1884, according to Chalmers, "envisaged schools in the main as public and tax-supported, church-affiliated, yet with the Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities in different communities retaining the right to establish separate, tax-supported schools" (11). According to Manzer, the system was patterned on the Manitoba School Act, 1871, which in turn was based on the "Quebec model of concurrent endowment" (56). Both Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, therefore, initially started out with dual confessional school models.

While the Ordinance of 1884 created a dual confessional system, it restricted religious practices in these schools. Section 83 limited opening prayer to those "adopted by the board of trustees." Section 84 said "No religious instruction, such as Bible reading or reciting, or reading or reciting of prayers, or asking questions or giving answers from any catechism, shall be permitted in any public or separate Protestant or

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[3] In 1881, the Territorial Council paid only half of a teacher's salary if it had at least 15 students, Race 51.

[4] Frank Oliver played an important role in school policy development in the Territories. Although he lost his Edmonton seat in the Territorial Council the next election, Chalmers 1967 14; he lost his seat due to the compulsory taxation issue with public school, Goresky 1944 40-41, Oliver was elected again in 1888 and 1894 to the Territorial Legislature and in 1896 he was elected to the House of Commons. As a long standing member of the Liberal Party, he influenced federal legislation creating the province of Alberta. When Sifton resigned over the controversy in restoring elements of a dual system in the new provinces, Prime Minister Laurier appointed Frank Oliver as Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Kostek 1992 26. M. A. Kostek, *A Century and Ten: The History of Edmonton Public Schools*, Edmonton: Edmonton Public Schools, 1992.

Catholic school" during regular school hours. Such instruction was restricted to the last half hour of school, only if the trustees permitted it, and only if children from other religious faiths were allowed to leave the room (see Lostek 35). Notably, this approach was thought necessary to accommodate the variety of views within the multi-denominational Protestant sector. This approach assumed, furthermore, that so-called 'sectarian' religion could be segregated from the rest of teaching and contained in a half-hour slot. These provisions for religious teaching were dropped for Catholic schools in the Ordinance of 1885, but restored for all schools with the ordinance of 1892 (Goresky 83).[5]

Following the passage of the 1884 Ordinance, the Council debated the appointment of the Board of Education. They agreed to appoint two members from each confessional section initially. Mr. Rouleau and Father Lacombe were appointed to the Catholic section and Mr. Secord and Mr. Marshall say to the Protestant section. Mr. John Brown was appointed secretary (Goresky 42-3). Only two months after the Ordinance of 1884 was passed, Edmontonians petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor for permission to set up the Edmonton Protestant School District.[6] Before the year was out, there were 30 Protestant and 8 RC public school districts in NWT (Chalmers 13-14).

Gradual restructuring of the dual confessional system

The Territorial Council began to weaken the dual confessional school model in the Ordinance of 1885, which was initiated to make pressing revisions and to consolidate the earlier ordinance. The Council amended the constitution of the Board of Education so that it reduced the amount of power which the religious sections of the Board held over the schools. Goresky reports:

> In the first act [1884] the majority of powers had been conferred on that body [the Board of Education] sitting as sections. These powers included the examination of teachers, the selection of books, and the appointment of inspectors. The second act [1885] left to the sections power only to cancel the certificate of a teacher upon sufficient cause and to control textbooks (44).

The aims of these changes, Goresky concludes, was the "gradual elimination of religious control" of education in favor of increased state control (44, see Race 52).[7]

In 1886, the Northwest Territories Council placed restrictions on the formation of additional separate school districts, making it illegal to form a separate school district unless a public district already existed. The same year, the Council passed *compulsory attendance* legislation. Although these laws were hardly enforced during the Territorial era, they illuminate the intentions of the legislators. Compulsory schooling laws, according to Cecil L. Race in his study of "Compulsory Schooling in Alberta (1888-1942), served both "to affirm the majority in their belief about the importance of schooling and "as a document for missionary work with the non-believers who did not attach importance to schooling" (43). He argues that as control of schooling moved from church to state, the political impulse increased to create good citizens, loyalty, unity, progress, and personal and social fulfillment (27-8). Compulsory schooling was a means to achieve these goals that were being defined by the majority. By 1892, compliance with the attendance law began to be measured in average daily attendance and made a condition for grants to school districts (Child 283).

In 1887, the Territorial Council expanded the Board of Education from 2 Protestant and 2 Catholic members to 5 members in the Protestant section and only three in the Catholic section. This reflected the reality that by 1885, Catholics had become a minority in the Territories. Yet, this change effectively gave Protestants an automatic majority in all decisions of the joint Board of Education, especially since the 1885 Act had given the joint Board increased power over all schools, such as the power to examine teachers and

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[5] Isidore Goresky, "The Beginning and Growth of the Alberta School System," Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Alberta, 1944.

[6] This was controversial, but only because many voters opposed a school that would be supported by compulsory taxation. Goresky 1944 38-41.

[7] Cecil L. Race, "Compulsory Schooling in Alberta (1888-1942)," Unpublished Masters Thesis, The University of Alberta, 1978.

appoint inspectors. The Ordinance of 1887 further clarified the division of powers between the Protestant and Catholic sections and the full Board of Education. Each section was given power to select textbooks for the *examination of teachers* in history and science and "the power to prescribe any additional subjection of examination for the teachers of the schools of its section" (Goresky 49).

The implications of Protestant domination in the Board of Education were soon seen in the area of inspection. *Inspection* is a powerful tool through which an outside body can influence and control schools. It is not surprising, therefore, that inspection became a central point of contention in the struggle between the Catholic Church and Protestant-dominated state over school models. In 1886, the Board of Education still appointed four inspectors according to the dual confessional model, that is, they were all "well-educated clergymen," and still equitably distributed, namely, two Protestants and two Catholics. But now that the Board of Education as a whole made decisions over school inspectors and the Board was dominated by Protestants, the Catholic schools feared they would no longer be inspected by Catholic inspectors. Later, in 1892, the dual confessional Board of Education was replaced with a unitary Council of Public Instruction and the Executive Council was given "authority to appoint all school inspectors, assign their places of work, and prescribe their duties" (Chalmers 367). The effective control of minority churches over the inspection of their schools had slipped away. Ultimately, school inspectors became an integral part of the state structure when the Department of Education was created for the Northwest Territories in 1901. The inspection of minority religious schools came to rely on the goodwill of state-appointed inspectors who might, or might not, have understood or sympathized with the religious vision motivating a school.[8]

Returning to 1888, the Federal Government abolished the Council of the Territories and created a Legislative Assembly of 25 members (22 elected and 3 appointed) with a provisional cabinet structure.[9] The new Assembly concentrated on attaining 'responsible government'--that is, fighting for executive power from the Lieutenant-Governor and placing it in the hands of a cabinet that would be responsible to the elected chamber. In 1888, *F.W.G. Haultain*, a lawyer elected from Fort Macleod in 1886, became leader of the first "advisory Council"--the early version of Cabinet that had "responsibility but no authority" (Goresky 47). Haultain led the charge to attain 'responsible government'. This fight became deeply intermingled with the issue of school systems. To many Anglo-Protestants in the Northwest Territories, the Board of Education with its dual sections appeared to be an imposition by Ottawa, simply another obstacle to the achievement of local and responsible government.[10]

By 1893, the Legislative Assembly gained responsible government. Haultain became effective leader of the Assembly in 1891 and from then on was considered Premier of the Northwest Territories. Haultain also held the leading educational position of Chairman of the Council of Public Instruction and then the successor position of Commissioner of Education (1893-1901). He strongly opposed any measure that would provide minorities with "the right to establish their own schools, teach in their own language, and share in the funds to maintain these schools" (MacGregor 188).[11]

The dual confessional school system came under severe pressure in the West when in 1890, the Government of *Manitoba* abolished its dual system and replaced it with a non-sectarian, state-controlled model. This action led to a protracted dispute in which the Federal government--empowered under the British North America Act, 1867 to "make remedial laws" for provincial violations of the religious education rights in s93—was pressured to restore the dual confessional school system. Ultimately, the Laurier-Greenway compromise of 1896 allowed the teaching of religion in class between 3:30 and 4:00

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[8] Chalmers 1967 concludes that by 1912 "the consolidation of the control and direction of the central authority over the *interna* of instruction was complete…" 368.

[9] In 1884, the Parliament also allocated to the Northwest Territories two seats in the Senate and four in the House of Commons.

[10] Not only was the political development of the West influenced by the struggle for responsible government but it was also complicated by disagreement and rivalry over the relative powers of the federal and provincial levels (the Northwest Territories aspired to full provincial powers), Tkach 1983 31.

[11] James G. MacGregor, *A History of Alberta*, Edmonton: Hurtig, 1972.

provided parents were permitted to excuse their children from such classes if they so wished. The compromise also allowed bilingual teaching in French, or a language other than English, if 10 or more students spoke that language. Manitoba adopted these provisions in its School Act in 1897, effectively making its school system a form of the non-sectarian state school model, albeit with a few legislated religious and linguistic minority privileges.[12]

The year before the Manitoba School crisis erupted (1889), a bill was introduced in the Assembly of the Northwest Territories to abolish the confessional sections of the Board of Education and to reduce the number of members. All schools should be considered merely public or separate. The reason given was to save money. The reality was that the amendment would have abolished denominational control of schools. The bill was defeated but the Assembly turned around and in the same session petitioned the Federal Government to repeal the separate school and dual language provisions of the Northwest Territories Act. This change would have freed the Territorial Assembly from any legislative constraints on its school action and made the state supreme in education. Ottawa denied these changes.

In 1891, a bill was introduced in the Assembly this time to abolish the complete Board of Education, the lynch pin of denominational control of education. Consideration of the bill was postponed but the writing was on the wall. As responsible government was close to being achieved in 1892, the Federal government began allowing the Territorial government to amend the school ordinances. The changes that resulted in the next year removed much of the separation and clerical supervision out of the school system.

Under the leadership of Premier Haultain, the Territorial Assembly adopted the school Ordinance of 1892 which replaced the dual confessional school system with a non-sectarian state system that allowed separate schools for Catholic and Protestant minorities. In the Northwest Territories, this Ordinance came to be referred to as the "Haultain School Ordinance" (McDonald 15).[13] The confessionally-bifurcated Board of Education—with its Catholic and Protestant sections—was replaced with a unitary Council of Public Instruction which functioned as one body instead of two confessional sections. The new Council of Public Instruction was designed "to achieve a common inspectorate, common examinations, uniform qualifications for teachers, one approved list of texts" (Chalmers 15-16). The Ordinance of 1892 put the overall administration of schools in the hands of a new "Superintendent of Education" (Race 52). This furthered the creation of a school system based on state control, centralization, and uniformity. The new structure placed the prescription of the central ingredients of all of the varying Protestant and Roman Catholic schools in the hands of one, presumably neutral, Council of Public Instruction and one Superintendent. The task of interpreting the meaning of a school's vision of life for the fundamental components of schooling—teachers, curriculum, inspection, testing and texts—now lay with a state Council and administrator.

Premier Haultain was appointed Chair of the Council of Public Instruction (1893-1901). Ultimate control over schooling now lay in the hands of this state Council which was, theoretically, controlled by the popularly elected majority of the Assembly. The Council of Public Instruction met in private, however, without scrutiny by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's), including the minority Catholic MLA's. Since the Council of Public Instruction, chaired by Haultain, had the power to make all regulations for education, it reigned supreme over the details of the school system without opportunity for public debate and criticism by MLA's (McDonald 17). The school model created by the Ordinance of 1892 differed from Ontario's model only in that it required that when a separate school was established, opting in would not be optional but *all* members of that minority would be taxed to pay for the school (Chalmers

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[12] W.L. Morton, "Manitoba Schools and Canadian Nationality, 1890-1923," in David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan, and Robert M. Stamp, Eds., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, Calgary: Detselig, 1979 3-13.

[13] According to Tkach (1983 26) Oliver and Haultain "were the principles who supported the movement to give elected representatives the right to control education. Under Haultain's leadership the two sections of the Board of Education were abolished in favour of unified control by a Council of Public Instruction."

15-17). Furthermore, the law initially required instruction to be in English, but subsequently French schools were also allowed.

In the context of the fight for Territorial autonomy and responsible government against the dominant Federal power, it is understandable that many MLA's would have argued to place "the control of education directly under the representatives of the people" (Goresky 66). Ironically, however, the majority of the Territorial Assembly immediately used its new-found powers to restrict the rights of its minority. This comes as no surprise, however, since Haultain publicly campaigned against the dual confessional system. He declared that he was "thoroughly opposed to two systems of schools and promised that he would work and vote against it as hard as possible. His concern was for national unity and he believed that a national school system was one of the most effective agencies in the achievement of his goal" (McDonald 17). The *Regina Standard* reported his speech in Yorkton in which "Haultain concluded by asking them [his audience] to assist in abolishing Protestant and Catholic antagonism in politics, education, and social life, and endeavor to unite people in one bond of national ideas" (McDonald 17). Haultain's commitment to a form of nationalism required the development of a form of school system that would promote the assimilation of the Catholic, French and other minorities.

Administering the separateness out of separate schools

Once the model of school system had been changed by the 1892 Ordinance, opportunities increased dramatically to "administer out of existence" those differences in separate schools which the majority disliked. This task fell to David J. Goggin, the new Superintendent of Education for the Northwest Territories (1893-1902). Goggin was thoroughly familiar with Ontario's school model where he was educated and had taught for his earliest years. Goresky observes that "by birth and training Dr. Goggin was connected with the best educational traditions of Ontario and had a high reputation with the educational bodies of the Dominion of Canada" (71). Goggin was also appointed the new Director of Normal Schools and thereby responsible for the training of new teachers for the Territories. He also held the position of director of examinations. Goggin did much to improve the quality of education being received in the Territories by enforcing tougher teacher examinations. In so doing, however, he did not make concessions for the Catholic view of education and teacher training. Relative to teacher qualifications, the Roman Catholics believed that Goggin's "methods of certifying teachers and of training them were inimical to their interests, nor did they appreciate his refusal to exempt members of their religious orders from the professional preparation demanded of lay teachers" (Chalmers 19-21).

The Council of Public Instruction used school inspectors as "efficient tools for the improvement of education" (Chalmers 20). While again this helped improve Territorial schooling in many respects, it left Catholic minorities little room or control to guide and improve their Catholic schooling. This problem was forcefully demonstrated by the difficulty Catholics had in securing a French Catholic school inspector between 1898-1903.[14]

The Ordinance of 1892 was strongly protested by the Roman Catholic leadership on the prairies--Archbishop Adelard Langevin (Bishop Taché's successor at St. Boniface), Bishop Grandin (St. Albert), and Bishop Emile Grouard (Athabasca-McKenzie). Their opposition was somewhat muted, however, as they awaited a Federal Government remedy for the Manitoba School Question. They hoped the same remedy used in Manitoba would be used to resolve the school problems in the Territories.

Many of the Catholic reasons for opposing the new school model were articulated by Father Hippolyte Leduc in the pamphlet: “Hostility Unmasked: [The] School Ordinances of 1892 of the Northwest Territories and its disastrous Results,” which finally appeared in 1896.[15] Although the Catholic leaders were somewhat divided on Leduc's style and tactics, they agreed with the content of the tract. Leduc argued for the re-establishment of Catholic schooling to the co-equal status of the Ordinance of

[14] See Manoly R. Lupul, "The Campaign for a French Catholic School Inspector in the Northwest Territories, 1898-1903," in Ramsey Cook, Craig Brown and Carl Berger eds. *Minorities, Schools, and Politics*, Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1969, 42-62.
[15] See the summary of his arguments in Ramrattan 1982 93-6.

1884 and argued that the 1892 Ordinance was a form of persecution of the RC Church (Carney 17). He maintained that the 1892 Ordinance had taken away "choice of books, examinations, inspector's and inspector's qualifications and diplomas of teachers" (25). Leduc accused Haultain and Goggin of being hostile to Catholics, Carney explains, and that it was clearly their intention "to rid the territories of [the] teaching sisters by requiring them to attend secular normal [teacher training] schools... and by refusing to acknowledge their teaching diplomas even though they held a valid certificate from other parts of the country" (25).

Archbishop Langevin worked hard to restore the dual confessional system in the Territories. He publicly stated that Quebec had been betrayed and that there will be a revolution in Quebec which will be heard throughout the entire country (Carney 26). Following the Laurier-Greenway Agreement of 1896, however, Pope Leo XIII issued the statement *Affari Vos* which urged the Catholics of Manitoba, and by extrapolation the Territories, "to derive all possible benefit" from the Laurier-Greenway Agreement and to share in his confidence that by exercising "moderation, gentleness and brotherly love" they would eventually obtain "full satisfaction" (cited in Carney 26). The Pope affirmed the Catholics' complaints but urged them to continue striving for genuine Catholic education. His statement pacified the Territorial Catholics while supporting their efforts to attain a better policy model for Catholic schooling.

Catholic objections were further provoked when the Territorial Assembly adopted the Ordinance of 1901, which extended state control over all important aspects of public and separate schools. Haultain described the increasing control of the state over Catholic schools that culminated in the 1901 Ordinance as: the Assembly "administered the separateness out of the separate schools" (Child 293).

The School Ordinance of 1901 abolished the Council of Public Instruction and replaced it with a Department of Education as a distinct branch of the public service. It was given a "political" Commissioner of Education at its head and an administrative Deputy Commissioner. Premier Haultain became the first Commissioner, thereby continuing his former role as Chair of the Council of Public Instruction. Most of Goggin's tasks as Superintendent of Education were taken on by the new Deputy Commissioner (Goggin resigned in 1903).

The School Ordinance 1901 also established an Educational Council of five members and required that two of its members be Catholic. The Council was asked to discuss "all regulations for inspection, examination, training, and certification of teachers" as well as "all matters dealing with the course of studies, teacher's institutes, textbooks, and references." Perhaps the Assembly made this concession because they did not want the Catholic Church to hinder their chances in their new drive to form a province. While the Educational Council looked like a generous concession, it was only an "advisory" body and "had no real power" (Chalmers 22). The 1901 Ordinance also restricted religious instruction to the last half-hour of class per day for all schools. This returned the rules back to the 1884 Ordinance from those in the1885 Ordinance which applied this restriction only to public and not separate schools (Goresky 83).

The Roman Catholics also opposed the 1901 Ordinance. Goresky concludes that "the control of teaching, inspection and text-books was so centralized under the Department of Education that the privileges of separate schools were very **inconsiderable** and were hardly worth the trouble and expense. This was a long step from the rights originally given to the minority by the Northwest Territories Act, 1875" (83-4). Speaking to a meeting of the archdiocesan hierarchy in 1902, Archbishop Langevin asserted that "the Church's role in determining such matters as teacher selection and curriculum content were necessarily paramount" and asserted that the Church, not parents or civil authorities should make the final decision as to who will teach in a Catholic school (Carney 29).

The push for provincial status

The Territorial government began to demand provincial status from the Federal government as early as 1901. Premier Haultain led the charge. The population of the Territories had grown rapidly during the past decade and was continuing to grow. Census statistics show a huge leap in immigration between

1897-1910. The population of the Territories in 1891 was 66,799, in 1901 it grew to 164,301, and in 1911 it jumped to 702,794. In period 1901-1911, Alberta and Saskatchewan grew by over 400%. (Race 56). Alberta's population in 1881 was 18,075, in 1891 it grew to 25,277, in 1901 it almost tripled to 73,022, and by 1906 it more than doubled to 185,412 (Tkach 20).[16] Over half of the immigrant group was of British origin, coming from Eastern Canada, United States, and Great Britain, and was primarily Protestant. At the same time, immigration brought a whole new range of religious, ethnic and linguistic communities. Immigration seriously affected the position of the French-speaking population in the Territories which had been on a rough parity with English speakers in 1881 but dropped to a tiny fraction by 1901.[17]

The process of creating new western provinces was controversial on many fronts, but particularly on the religious front. The first drafts of the provincial "autonomy bills" that Prime Minister Laurier introduced in Parliament incorporated the school clause from the Northwest Territories Act of 1875. This clause was somewhat vague, but had been initially molded into the dual confessional school model with Roman Catholic and Protestant sections and control. This wording, however, had also allowed the transformation of the school system into the model implemented with the 1901 Ordinance. Prime Minister Laurier introduced his original bill by saying: "I would say that I never could understand what objection there could be to a system of schools wherein, after secular matters have been attended to, the tenets of the religion of Christ…. are allowed to be taught."[18] It is not clear, however, what Laurier meant. Perhaps he was referring to the Manitoba compromise in which religion was simply taught at the end of the school day.

Clifford Sifton, the Federal Minister of the Interior, who had been the Minister responsible for managing the huge immigration influx in the West, wanted to incorporate the more precise and limited provisions of the 1901 Ordinance which featured state control and very limited rights for religious minorities. This difference sparked a huge controversy in Eastern Canada, although it was much milder in the West. Not surprisingly, Premier Haultain publicly opposed guaranteed government funding for separate schools, arguing that legislating this provision would infringe on provincial rights (Ramrattan 102). Some Eastern newspapers argued that there should be no separate school clause in the autonomy bills at all. Goggin, who now lived in the East, also protested this provision (Goresky 92). Sifton opposed Laurier's bill and resigned from cabinet. Laurier protested that

> the bills merely safeguarded the existing system in which there were no separate schools as Ontario understood them but a system of essentially national schools. He quoted from the Ordinance of 1901 to show the extent of the control of the Department of Education over what were considered separate schools…. He sympathized with the ideals of those who urged the need of national schools to hold together a country of many diverse creeds and origins but he could not agree that, in the schools or out, national unity involved a drab and compulsory uniformity. (Goresky 93-4).

The Prime Minister concluded that the Northwest Territories had already built up a system of "national schools" under the clause he had proposed.

A compromise clause was drafted "guaranteeing the rights of the minority as they stood under the ordinance 1901" (Goresky 96). The province would not restore the dual confessional system after all. It would retain the existing state school system with separate school guarantees but government grants would now only be paid "to schools if they were conducted in accordance with provincial laws, rather than being based upon attendance records" (Ramrattan 102). The new province's control of Catholic education was complete. Two new provinces were created out of the lower parts of the Northwest Territories,

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[16] Nicholas Tkach, *Alberta Catholic Schools: A Social History*, Edmonton: University of Alberta Printing, 1983.

[17] See Manoly R. Lupul, "The Schools and French- and Ukranian-Language Claims in Alberta to 1918," in Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek, eds., *Exploring our Educational Past*, Calgary: Detselig, 1992, 73-91.

[18] Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Hansard, 1905, Vol. I, p. 1458, cited in Goresky 1944 90. The following paragraphs are based on Goresky 1944 who analyzes the politics around the schools clause in the autonomy acts, pp. 89-98.

Saskatchewan and Alberta. The Province of Alberta was brought into official existence on September 1, 1905.

The Catholic assessment of the Alberta school model

The Roman Catholic Church was fortunate that the Alberta Act 1905 did not abolish Catholic schools and did not implement a uniform, non-sectarian public school system as Manitoba had in 1890 and British Columbia in 1872. The non-sectarian state school system with minority denominational districts, which Alberta adopted, did affirm some minority educational rights of Catholics. Ramrattan summarizes the positive aspects of the 1905 arrangement:

> There were two Catholic representatives on the Educational Council; taxes from Catholic rate-payers were used to support Catholic separate schools; Catholic trustees of a separate school district could choose their own teachers provided that the teachers had their diplomas and the last half-hour of the school day could be used for religious instruction. In addition, separate school districts could be formed within the boundaries of existing public school districts and in French-Catholic schools the primary course could be taught in French (105).

The loss of the minority Catholic rights built into the 1884 dual confessional system, however, was considerable. The model of school system affirmed in the Alberta Act 1905 only superficially resembled the dual confessional system of 1884. Under the 1884 Ordinance, Catholic and Protestant communities each controlled an equal section of the Territorial Board of Education and thereby directed and administrated the curriculum, inspection, textbooks and teacher certification of their own schools. In the 1905 act, Chalmers argues,

> and ever since 1892, the separate schools are an integral part of the public school system. A separate school district is defined in terms of a public school district; the boundaries are coterminous. Its curriculum, with very minor modifications, is that of the public school. Its inspectors, elementary or high school, are those who visit the public schools. Its teachers must meet not merely equivalent but the same standards that are imposed on public school teachers. Even the right to religious instruction is the same as that granted to (but seldom exercised by) public schools: not more than one half hour per day, and that normally the last half hour (322-23).

Catholic parents had lost the right to choose schooling defined by their Church. The Catholic church had lost the right to shape the education of its members. Catholics were prevented from starting their own 'normal schools' for training teachers to work out of a Catholic framework. They considered teacher training essential for Catholic schooling but Catholic teachers were forced to attend state-run teacher training programs. Restrictions on religious practices undermined their ability to have a Catholic perspective permeate the entire curriculum. They also lost the ability to design curriculum that would balance academic and religious training in the ways that the Catholic tradition had developed. Catholics had to use books and curriculum that were designed or chosen by the Protestant-controlled state. Catholic schools underwent state inspection and their teacher certification was done by state officials, who may or may not have understood or have been sympathetic to the Catholic vision of schooling and life.

There were also other problems (taken from Chalmers 323). Catholics could only establish a school when they constituted an acceptable sized minority within an existing district, even if it was very small or did not correspond with the distribution of Catholic students. Rural areas found it almost impossible to finance a school in existing small rural districts. Furthermore, school establishment grants only went to the first school in a district, generally a non-Catholic public school. In concluding, however, Chalmers observes in 1967 (or perhaps warns?), that should conditions improve in Alberta, Catholics may again insist on:

> Roman Catholic curricula for the schools, inspectors for Roman Catholic schools, institutions to train teachers for these systems, perhaps special teacher certification, official Roman Catholic representation on Department of Education curriculum and other committees and boards--in other

words, a complete return to the Quebec system of the late 1800's, a system which is abandoned even in the province of its origins (328-9).[19]

Finally, the problems and injustice experienced by the Catholic minority are in some ways paradigmatic of the challenges faced by other existing minorities (aboriginal and small Protestant groups) and new immigrant communities, whether based on religion, ethnicity or language. Each new community had its own vision and expectations, e.g. Ukrainians of the Greek Catholic rite, Russian Jews, Hungarians, German Lutherans, American Mormons, Lebanese Muslims, Calvinists from Holland, and so on. Some have managed to develop schooling solutions. Chalmers notes for example, that the Hutterites in Alberta have "been equally successful in solving the same problem" as the Roman Catholics "but in a quite different manner" (329-333). In addition, Dutch Calvinists along with other independent schools have managed to secure a percentage of the government per-pupil grants for their non-state schools since 1967. Many minorities, however, feel tremendous pressure from the state to enter the uniform public school system and have often been gradually *assimilated* into the majority culture (see Palmer and Palmer). Others resist and have been *isolated* into 'private' schools outside the public system, sometimes without adequate regulations and funding, e.g. this was true historically for many early independent schools (see Hop 1982 and Digout 1969). In recent years, some minorities have secured additional degrees of freedom for school choice by initiating alternative schools within the public system, charter schools and home schooling (see Wagner 1998).

THE SHAPING INFLUENCE OF 'VISIONS OF LIFE'

In this section, the paper directly analyzes the beliefs and thinking that shaped and directed the debate and struggle for a school system in Alberta. In essence, two fundamentally different visions of life conflicted, each suggesting different types of schools, school systems and school policy. The section begins by articulating some of the central questions and concerns that emerge from the historical Alberta school debates, questions that elicited different answers from the two dominant religious communities.

Underlying questions:

1. Since the majority community within most political jurisdictions controls its own school system, why should members of minority communities not have the same right to choose schooling shaped by their community?
2. Why do parents in some religious, philosophical, ethnic and linguistic minority communities want to have significant control over the schooling of their children?
3. Is it possible to isolate the sectarian elements of a religion, such as Christianity, from the general and moral elements of this religion and from the substance of the general curriculum? What happens if the majority thinks this is possible and the minority disagrees?
4. What is the role of parents in choosing and shaping the education of their children? Who gets to determine the vision of life that is passed on to a child in a school, the parents, church, teaching professionals, the state?
5. Should religious institutions like churches be allowed to control schools when enrollment in the school is based on choice? Who should decide on this question?
6. Should the state use schooling to achieve national goals such as creating good citizens, loyalty, national unity, progress, or personal and social fulfillment? What about the state using compulsory schooling as a means to achieve the other goals established by the majority?
7. Should minority rights in education be protected in law, in the constitution, or be subject to decision-making by tribunals, administrators or local school boards elected by the majority?

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[19] Chalmers 1967 argues that the Hutterites in Alberta have "been equally successful in solving the same problem" as the Roman Catholics "but in a quite different manner," 329-333.

8. Should the power to prescribe the central components of different types of schools--e.g. teacher training and hiring, curriculum development, school and teacher inspection, testing, and textbook selection--be placed in the hands of a single, presumably neutral, educational agency, department, or Superintendent? Who should have the power to interpret the meaning of a religious, ethnic, or philosophical vision for these fundamental components of a school?
9. What is the proper type and level of public scrutiny that state should have of schools, whether religious or other types of schools, and on what matters?
10. What should happen when the majority group's ideology, e.g. nationalism, requires the forced assimilation of one or more minority groups and the weakening of their beliefs?

These basic questions and issues of school policy can be understood and addressed quite differently by people holding different visions of life. We now examine the two dominant visions of life that were present in Alberta--the Roman Catholic tradition and the Protestant Ryerson tradition--and the answers they gave to these types of questions in the process of creating the Alberta school system. Other visions of life were also present, e.g. aboriginal and various immigrant religious and ethnic groups, but they were small and marginalized during this school struggle.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

The Roman Catholic church in Canada historically assumed responsibility for the educational and linguistic defense of the rights of French Canadians under British rule. Carney argues that in Quebec,

> A Catholic schooling ethos was formulated in which religion and language became the keys to the collective and personal well-being of French Canadians. The ethos was also predicated on Pope Pius IX (1846-78), that Catholics had a right to their own schools at all levels and that Catholic parents had a responsibility to see that their children attended such schools. This ethos became the model for Catholic schooling in the newly acquired West during the 1870s and 1880s where the groundwork had already been laid by missionaries (21).

This schooling ethos, established in French Catholic Lower Canada by the mid-19th century, helped shape Catholic thinking in Northwest Territories/Alberta.

The Catholic understanding of the educational roles of the church hierarchy, parents, and teachers were significantly shaped by late 19th and early 20th century papal encyclicals. Annette Ramrattan[20] argues that the Canadian Catholic hierarchy was committed to "ultramontane beliefs," that is, the bishops regarded the Pope's authority as supreme over all national churches and denied the state had power to create or control national churches (29). The Roman Catholic theory of schooling espoused in Edmonton "was a replication of the papal statements regarding schooling and demonstrated complete obedience and allegiance to the directives of the papal authorities" (30). Ramrattan concludes that:

> papal directives concerning the Catholic theory of schooling were carefully studied by the American and Canadian Catholic hierarchy and subsequently utilized to support their demands for Catholic schools for all children. The six themes of the Catholic theory of schooling, enunciated by the popes and endorsed by the North American hierarchy, provided the foundations for the Catholic theory of schooling in the Northwest Territories (1875-1905) and in Alberta (1905-1960) (75-6).

She sets out the Catholic theory of schooling in six themes: "the divine mission of the church to educate; the role of parents in schooling; Catholic schools for all Catholic children; the permeation ideal of Catholic schooling; the responsibilities and characteristics of Catholic teachers; and the relationship between intellectual and moral training" (30). The following analysis of Catholic school thinking is based on Ramrattan's historical examination of these themes. I show how these Catholic teachings relate to some of the issues and questions raised above.

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[20] Annette Ramrattan, *The Theory of Catholic Schooling in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, 1884-1960*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Alberta, 1982. See especially see 28-77.

The divine mission of the Church to educate

In the late 19th and early 20th century, various popes elaborated on the Church's understanding of its the teaching role. They opposed the "secularization of education," by which they meant taking schools out from under the authority of the church. The Church was understood as a divine institution and therefore has a unique and high calling to communicate religious truth to the world. In 1888, Pope Leo XIII argued that the church's teaching role was central:

> She is therefore the greatest and most reliable teacher of mankind, and in her dwells an inviolable right to teach men. Sustained by the truth received from her divine Founder, the Church has always sought to fulfill in a holy manner the mission entrusted to her by God. (cited in Ramrattan 32).

Pope Pius XI restated the modern Catholic view of education in his encyclical "Christian Education of Youth" in 1929. His views drew heavily from earlier encyclicals, especially those of Pope Leo XIII. Ramrattan summarizes Pius XI's position:

> Pius defined the three societies into which man is born, namely the family (an imperfect society), the civil order and the Church (perfect societies). He maintained that, as a supernatural mother, the church had the right to decide what would help or harm Christian education. Further, he reiterated the position of his predecessor regarding the divine mandate to teach that had been given to the church and added that the church was obliged to exercise this God-given right. It can be concluded, therefore, that papal authorities repeatedly maintained that the church had a divine mandate to educate and church leaders were obligated to do all in their power to fulfill this mission. (34-5).

Clearly, this view of the Catholic Church's role in revealing religious truth to the world required the Church to hold an authoritative position in the schooling of her members. Since all truth was linked to the highest truth of God, all aspects of schooling must be subjected to the Church's direction as the only institution with access to this truth. The Territorial and Alberta school systems, however, transformed dual confessional control of schooling to state control of schooling. At least for the Catholic section of schools, this was unacceptable. It meant the democratically elected majority, which was Protestant, would be allowed to determine the truth that would be taught in all schools, including the Catholic schools. State authorities would select texts, curriculum, conduct inspections and certify and hire teachers.

The role of parents in schooling

The Catholic Church teaches that it is the primary right of parents to choose the type of schools their children should attend. This applies to all parents, not just Catholic parents. The various Popes suggest that it is the duty of Catholic parents to ensure that their children are sent to Catholic schools. Traditionally, Ramrattan argues, Catholic parents who send their children to public schools without the permission of their bishop were failing in their duties as Christian parents" (35). In 1890, Pope Leo XIII taught:

> The family may be regarded as the cradle of civil society…Consequently, they who would break away from Christian discipline are working to corrupt family life and destroy it utterly, root and branch. From such an unholy purpose they are not deterred by the fact that they are inflicting a cruel outrage on parents, who have the right from nature to educate those whom they begot, a right to which is joined the duty of harmonizing instruction and education with the end for which they were given their children by the goodness of God. It is then incumbent upon parents to make every effort to resist attacks on this point and to vindicate at any cost the right to direct the education of their offspring, as is fitting, in a Christian manner; and first and foremost to keep them from schools where there is risk of their being imbued with the poison of impiety." (cited in Ramrattan 36).

Pope Leo XIII directed *Affari Vos* to the Bishops of Canada after the Catholics lost the Manitoba School Crisis (December 8, 1897). He stated:

> Therefore, when Catholics ask, and it is their duty to ask and demand, that the education given by teachers be in accordance with the religion of their children, they are using their right. And no

> greater injustice can be done to parents than to place them in the dilemma of either letting their children grow up in ignorance, or of putting them in surroundings which constitute a clear danger for the higher interests of their souls. (cited in Ramrattan 37).

Pope Pius XI supported this position in May, 1929:

> The state is not made to absorb, to engulf and to annihilate the individual and the family; that would be ridiculous, it would be contrary to nature in that the family precedes the State and society. The State cannot neglect the question of education but must contribute and procure what is necessary and sufficient to help, to cooperate and to perfect the efforts of the family, to correspond entirely with the desires of the father and mother and above all to respect the divine right of the church. (cited in Ramrattan 37).

This Catholic teaching on the prior right of parents to choose the type of education they want for their children helped answer the question of how minorities should be treated by the school system. Catholics of the Northwest Territories argued, at least for themselves, that they must be given choices that correspond with their deepest convictions.

Catholic schools for all Catholic children

Pope Leo XIII advised Catholics to stay away from mixed religious schools and to start their own Catholic schools. This position was also echoed by later Popes. Only Catholic schools, the popes argued, "could provide the religious education that was necessary preparation for Catholic living (Ramrattan 39). When it became clear, for example, that the United States was pushing for public, non-sectarian common school system, Pope Pius IX wrote the US Bishops advising:

> Every effort must, therefore, be made to set up Catholic schools where they do not exist and to increase the number of and improve the organization of those that already exist so that instruction and training on the same level as those of the public school may be ensured. (cited in Ramrattan 38).

Catholic schooling was not understood to be a frill on the prairies, it was a religious requirement for all Catholic children.

The permeation ideal of Catholic schooling

The question of what role religion ought to play in schooling was controversial on the prairies. Pope Leo XIII articulated the Catholic permeation ideal as follows: "religion must not be taught to youth only during certain hours, but the entire system of education must be permeated with Christian piety" (cited in Ramrattan 1982 40 from Leo XIII *Militantis Ecclesiae*, August 1, 1897.) Pope Pius XI, in *Divini Ilius Magistri* (Dec. 31, 1929) repeats and elaborates this theme:

> [To be] a fit place for Catholic students… it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, its teachers, syllabus and text books of every kind, be regulated by the Christian spirit under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church, so that religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of youth's entire training; and this applies to every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well. (cited in Ramrattan 41).

This Catholic permeation ideal is dramatically different from the dominant Protestant view in the late 19th century that religion as sectarian truth could be taught at home and church, and if necessary, for a half-hour after school. The teaching of morality and general subjects was unaffected by religion. The Catholic permeation ideal clearly ruled out this compromise position. The Catholic faith was important for all aspects of schooling.

The responsibilities and characteristics of Catholic teachers

The question of being taught by non-Catholic teachers was also addressed in papal statements. Pope Leo XIII argued in 1887 that the type of person needed to teach in Catholic schools would be clergy and people of virtuous qualities.

> Civil prudence itself recommends that we leave to the Bishops and the clergy their part in the education and instruction of youth, and take care that men of indifferent religion or no religion at

> all, or openly hostile to the church, should not be entrusted with the noble duty of teaching (cited in Ramrattan 42).

This statement is not entirely clear on whether all general teachers must be Catholic. In another context, Pope Leo XIII stated that the teachers who do not teach clergy-like topics must at least be "endowed with all the necessary natural or acquired qualities" (in *Affari Vos*, Dec. 8, 1897, cited in Ramrattan 43).

The relationship between intellectual and moral training

The relationship of intellectual and moral development was not addressed by Popes in the 19th century. Not until 1922, did Pius XI push for "a balance between academic learning and religious instruction" and did the Church articulate its views on educating the whole person (Ramrattan 46). This general Catholic ideal of teaching the whole person is, however, clearly present in the works of the great Catholic thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas.

These six Catholic perspectives on schooling are rooted in the biblical, theological and philosophical traditions of the Church. They reflect Catholic answers to the deepest, underlying questions of life, such as, the nature of people, the results of sin, the meaning and purpose of historical life, the nature of society, the reach of grace and redemption, and so forth. The Protestant tradition shared these concerns but sometimes offered different answers to them. As a result, their prescriptions for schooling were different. The dominant Canadian Protestant view of schooling was shaped in a large part by leaders like Egerton Ryerson of Upper Canada who played a key role in shaping the Protestant communities' views on these basic questions.

THE PROTESTANT RYERSON TRADITION

Alan H. Child argues in "The Ryerson Tradition in Western Canada, 1871-1906" that the dominant influence on western Canadian school development was the 'Ryerson tradition' that had been firmly established in Ontario by 1871. The Ryerson tradition influenced the West through the politicians, school officials and teachers that moved to the west from Ontario. Child and other commentators identify David J. Goggin and Frederick W.G. Haultain as the two key figures who brought Ryerson's ideas to the schooling question in the Northwest Territories (279). McDonald[21] argues that "Haultain and Goggin were so inextricably linked to educational developments in the Territories that it is difficult to discuss them separately. It was as though each one compensated for the authority and knowledge which the other lacked." (18). Haultain had the political authority and Goggin the educational and administrative knowledge, but both wanted to implement a national school system.

Child summarizes the Ryerson school tradition as: "free, universal, Protestant education, designed to promote nationalism and social stability, controlled mainly by a central authority, and financed mainly at the local level" (279). Both Haultain and Goggin were motivated by this model. Cecil Race points to the "philosophical roots" of this new school system:

> For both men national schools were a vital agency for developing and preserving a national identity. In their thinking, Canadian unity demanded cultural uniformity, but a cultural uniformity defined by them to be a Canadianization occurring within the value system of the Anglo-Saxon majority and sustained by a respect for the British Empire (54).

Haultain said that the "function and mission" of the school was to "mould and assimilate all families making the prairies their home" (cited in Child 287). Goggin was widely known as "a Canadian nationalist imperialist who strongly identified with the Anglo-Saxon WASP community of nineteenth century Canada" (McDonald 19). Both had absorbed the *nationalism* of a Protestant, British-Canadian variety from their very similar experiences and training in Ontario. Both were heavily influenced by their practical experience of the Ryerson tradition in Ontario.

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[21] Neil G. McDonald, "David J. Goggin: Promoter of National Schools," in David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan, and Robert M. Stamp, Eds., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, Calgary: Detselig, 1979 14-28.

Child further argues that the Ryerson tradition is similar to other common school movements in other countries in that they are all "the product of the nation state" (280). He states:

> All common-school systems tended to be basically similar whether they originated in France, Germany, the United States, Australia, or Ontario. So that all citizens would be trained to serve the nation, it was necessary that schooling be free, universal, and compulsory. National identity required cultural uniformity, which in turn required uniformity of teaching methods and curriculum. To ensure unity, schools had to be secular, or, at the very least, non-sectarian, and it was essential, furthermore, that the schools promote social stability. All this could be achieved only if the schools were centrally controlled. Finally, some method of financing the enterprise was necessary, and this suggested taxation (280).

This argument is compelling insofar as the power of the state was often needed to deal with the challenges and effects of economic growth, industrialization and urbanization faced by most countries in Western civilization. Child's approach does not explain, however, the major differences in the ways that national systems dealt with religious, philosophical, ethnic, and language plurality (e.g. British, Dutch, and French school systems) or the very significant differences in Canadian provincial systems (see Manzer's models). Does Child's approach not assume too quickly that secularization automatically accompanies modernization? He seems to assume that history inevitably moves toward non-sectarian, and ultimately secular, state school systems. Furthermore, this form of secularization theory assumes that Manzer's other models of school system were merely temporary halts on the progressive march toward educational secularism. While the switch in the Northwest Territories from dual confessional system to a non-sectarian public schooling system with minority denominational districts seems to bear this out, a serious question remains. Why did deeply committed Protestant politicians and educators choose to downplay religion in schooling? The pressures of state emerging from colonial status can provoke a nationalist attitude, but why did so many Protestants accept a watered-down 'non-sectarian' definition of their faith? Why did they accept an increasingly marginalized and privatized position for religion in schooling that ultimately relegated religion to an after-school extra? And, even if Protestants accepted this view of their own faith, why would they have imposed it on Catholics who clearly rejected this view?

To adequately answer these important question, we need to examine not only the 'environmental' impacts, such as, geographic location or immigration, but also account for the deepest visions of life that guided the various actors. The answer to the shift in school system in the Northwest Territories lies in the type of vision and thinking that Egerton Ryerson propagated and which was shared by many leading figures of Upper Canada.

The deeper roots of the Ryerson school tradition

There are four elements to Ryerson's thinking that supported his view of schooling. First, the type of *Protestantism* that Ryerson held was a dualistic form of evangelical Protestantism. Along with many leading thinkers in the Protestant churches, Ryerson believed Protestantism was the highest form of Western civilization. Protestants believed in the direct religious relationship of the individual person to God. The church was not a "divine" institution that could mediate this relationship but rather a voluntary association of redeemed people. Therefore, Ryerson assumed that Catholicism was a priest-ridden system that was dominated by a regressive church hierarchy.

In Ryerson's dualistic thinking, the realm of salvation and evangelism were primary and the realm of nature and culture secondary. Christian faith impacted on the latter realm but primarily through the influence of Christian morality. A central role of education, for Ryerson, was the inculcation of Christian morality. He firmly believed that the basis of all education was religion. He stated: "It is the cultivation of man's moral powers and feelings which forms the basis of social order and the vital fluid of social happiness; and the cultivation of these is the province of Christianity" (Child 289-90). The divisions of the church between Catholic and Protestant, and within Protestantism, led Ryerson and others in his time to search for *a common core of belief* to which all Christians would subscribe, thus, a non-sectarian

Christianity. This non-sectarian religion ended up looking a lot like Protestant morality to the Roman Catholics. They fundamentally disagreed with Ryerson on many points and therefore insisted on controlling their own schooling in Upper Canada. This demand, however, fundamentally challenged Ryerson's central idea of building a progressive nation through common, non-sectarian education in public schools.

It should be noted, at this point, that Protestants such as Ryerson accepted several central tenants of Enlightenment liberalism in proposing a 'non-sectarian' definition of their faith. This Enlightenment position implied the increasing marginalization and privatization of religion in schooling as a natural outcome of the commitment to the Enlightenment 'religion' of progress. Secularization moved in tandem with modernization, therefore, because people increasingly believed that it ought to. Ultimately, Ryerson synthesized elements of Protestant Christianity with Enlightenment liberalism into a dualistic position.

The second theme in Ryerson thinking, along side his Evangelical Protestantism, was *nationalism*. This theme also illustrates Ryerson's dualistic vision of life. Along side his Christian convictions, he shared the common, Upper Canadian loyalty to Canada and to Great Britain. According to Child:

> The greatness of Canada… lay in its reliance on British institutions, its settlement by British people, and its membership in the mighty British Empire. Intensifying this colonial nationalism was the strong imperial sentiment of the 1880s and the 1890s. The textbooks used in western Canada were designed to show the superiority of British institutions and the British 'race' (288).

An important role of schooling was to support the development of this British nationalism in the Canadian setting. Proper schooling teaches students to live as a "member of the civil community," that this involves "character building," and these are the practices that develop and sustain true "civilization" (289). Thus, Christianity was profoundly married to and compromised by a moral understanding of nationalist citizenship. The importance of schooling to the progress of civilization became even more pressing with the increase in non-British immigration and diverse western settlement.

Third, because of the importance of Protestantism and nationalism to the attainment of true civilization, Ryerson insisted that schooling ought to be *uniform*. This emphasis on uniformity can be seen in Ryerson's emphasis on all schools using authorized textbooks, common programs of study, external examinations, and common normal schools for training all teachers. Child argues that this element of the Ryerson tradition was commonly accepted in the west.

> The purpose of uniformity of inspection, method, and content was the achievement of cultural uniformity. In this regard, the large number of immigrants to the prairies from central and eastern Europe posed a special problem, often commented upon in the Northwest Territories.… The mosaic concept [that is, "Canadian mosaic of diverse cultures"] was absent from the thinking of western school officials; they wanted the Canadian prairies to be a melting pot, and the mosaic that resulted was a mark of their partial failure (Child 287).

The fourth characteristic of Ryerson's thinking was *central control* by the state of all important aspects of schooling. Local trustees could care for grounds, buildings and specific hiring of teachers but the important aspects of education should be centrally controlled, such as, the "course of studies, textbooks, examinations, normal-school training, and certification and inspection of teachers" (Child 295-6). The central aims of schooling--Protestantism and nationalism--were simply too important to progress and civilization to leave to local discretion.

Ironically, Ryerson's position was the exact opposite of predecessor Anglican Bishop John Strachan, the first permanent holder of the position of "Chief school superintendent in Canada West (Ontario)" in the early 19th century (Chalmers 365-6). Strachan believed in elitist, class-based schooling, but believed the *interna,* such as, curricula, textbooks, examinations, should be left to local initiative. C. P. Collins observes:

> To Dr. Strachan each local area had the full responsibility for providing the type and quality of education it desired and could afford; to Egerton Ryerson the state had a responsibility to all its citizens for providing a universal free system of education on a uniform basis, guaranteed and

> underwritten by the central government. Dr. Strachan believed that the local school, in true English tradition, should control the *interna* of institution (sic) and the central government the *externa*, Egerton Ryerson believed the reverse. No uniform system of free universal education could be successful, Ryerson was certain, if the central authority did not control the core of the program of instruction--the *interna*.[22]

Ryerson's commitment to achieving the aims of Protestantism and nationalism meant it was best to leave the substance of schooling to the Protestant majority-controlled state.

The Constantinian model applied to schooling

Although Ryerson disagreed with Bishop Strachan on the features of schooling that ought to be controlled by a central state, they both promoted a similar model of schooling. I refer to this as the *Constantinian model* of schooling. The roots of this model go back to the Roman Emperor Constantine, whose conversion to Christianity in 312 led to the development of a distinct model of relating political authority to faith. Borrowing in part from earlier pagan traditions, Constantine gradually developed a model in which the Christian prince officially recognized, and partly sponsored, Christian worship and practices in society. Thus, this model involved a measure of coercion in the practice of religion. The Constantinian model was generally practiced up to Pope Gregory's VII (1073-1086) imposition of *theocracy*, when the Roman Catholic Church took leadership over the Christian prince and the society. Theocracy waned in the late Middle Ages, and with the deepening pluralism due to the Protestant Reformation became impossible to sustain. Following the Peace of Westphalia (1648), many of the newly emerging states of Europe sought to organize and unite their societies by 'establishing' state churches. These established churches were intended to 'generate and perpetuate the common core beliefs needed to unite the states.' Subjects within each state were coerced to conform to the beliefs of the realm, and failure to do so led, at minimum, to the relinquishing of official honors, public offices and social privileges.

In the eighteenth century, Enlightenment philosophers challenged the traditional beliefs of Christianity. They argued that true *knowledge* was discovered by science and is objective while the churches' belief that truth is revealed in Scripture was subjective and simply a form of *opinion*. Societies run according to revelation produce regressive and repressive societies, they argued, while societies based on scientific knowledge would lead to utopia, material prosperity, and progress. Consequentially, religion should be kept private and personal. Scientific-based knowledge must become the common currency of the public realm. True knowledge can best be generated and perpetuated in the masses, the Enlightenment philosophers argued, not through *established churches* but through *established common schools*. All children should be required to attend public schools in order to ensure they can access true knowledge and thereby contribute to the progress of society. The established state church, therefore, ought to be replaced by an established common school since it is best able to generate and perpetuate the values needed to advance and unite the territorial state. So began the *Constantinian model* of public or common schooling.

In Upper Canada, Bishop Strachan fought for, but failed to continue, the English tradition of the established Anglican Church. Protestant Upper Canada was simply too religiously divided to continue this practice. In the face of this religious diversity, the school reformer, Egerton Ryerson (who, as argued above, adhered to a synthesis of Protestant and Enlightenment beliefs) chose to shift the role of generating and perpetuating values for the Upper Canadian state from an established church to an established, common school system. The four elements of Ryerson's thought led him to adopt this *Constantinian model* of schooling.

Accommodating separate schools

The claim that Ryerson essentially adopted a *Constantinian model* of schooling does not comport well with Ontario's policy of supporting "minority denominational districts." In fact, Egerton Ryerson did

[22] C. P. Collins, "The Role of the Provincially Appointed Superintendent of Schools in Larger Units of Administration in Canada" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, 1958), cited in Chalmers 1967 366.

not support the principle of separate denominational schools. When he became superintendent of schools in Upper Canada in 1844, Ryerson "*inherited* a school system that permitted the establishment of dissentient Catholic and Protestant schools" (Carney 20, my emphasis). He worked with this existing model of religious separate schools but he did **not** think it an acceptable model. In 1852, Ryerson wrote:

> I always thought the introduction of any provision for separate schools…was to be regretted and inexpedient; but finding such a provision in existence, and that parties concerned attached great importance to it, I have advocated its continuance,--leaving separate schools to die out, not by force of legislative enactment, but under the influence and enlarged views of Christian relations, rights and duties between different classes of the community.[23]

In fact, Ryerson tried hard to persuade the first two Catholic bishops of Upper Canada to "abandon their support for a separate Catholic school system." In 1850, however, the new Bishop of Toronto, Armand de Charbonnel, rejected any compromise on Catholic schooling. Ryerson wrote Charbonnel in 1852 arguing that by insisting on their own autonomous schools, Catholics would be dooming "themselves to a hopeless inferiority in comparison with other classes of fellow citizens" (Carney 20). In 1865, Ryerson wrote:

> I think that no one will maintain that Separate Schools are expedient *for the interests of the State*…. Upon public grounds…the law for Separate Schools cannot be maintained…but the chief injury of such isolation must fall upon the Roman Catholics themselves. Then the youth of those inferior schools are not only excluded from the advantages of the better schools…. Then envy, then hatred of the more successful and prosperous classes, then mutual consultations and excitement to revenge their imaginary wrongs, and relieve themselves of their deeply felt but self-inflicted evils…[my emphasis].[24]

When it was apparent that Catholic schools would not disappear rapidly, Ryerson made sure to impose the same central state control of all aspects on Catholic separate schools. This same tactic was later used by Haultain and Goggin in the Northwest Territories.

CONCLUSION

The structure of the school system formally adopted in the Alberta Act 1905 was largely the product of the Ryerson tradition of thinking—a synthesis of Anglo-Protestant and Enlightenment thinking—with a largely unintended concession to Catholic schools. The conflict between the Ryerson tradition and the Roman Catholic tradition of thinking was very strong on many central school questions. In the end, the Catholic conceptualization of the relationships between church, state and schooling—present in part in the dual confessional model—was dismantled by the Ryersonian Protestant way of arranging the same elements. Premier Haultain and Superintendent Goggin essentially used the majority political strength of the Protestants in the Northwest Territories to implement their preferred model of schooling. This model was, however, still a version of the *Constantinian model* of generating and perpetuating values for the progress and unification of society. The specifics of the Northwest Territories version of the *Constantinian model* was the product of an Enlightenment-Protestant synthesized vision of life, a vision developed and propagated by the Upper Canadian school reformer Egerton Ryerson. The values Haultain and Goggin wanted to generate and perpetuate in the Northwest Territories were those of the Anglo-Protestant majority, namely, Christian morality and "non-sectarian doctrines" along with British Parliamentary traditions and market economics. The means for perpetuating common beliefs now shifted from the *established church* to the *established common schools*, but coercion still proved central to this system. In accepting this model, the Protestants voluntarily accepted a limited and largely privatized idea of the essence, extent, and influence of their Christian beliefs. Faith would play a limited role in Canadian cultural activities, including schooling and politics.

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[23] Child 1978 290, taken from C. B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*, (2 Vols., Toronto, 1947, II), 254.
[24] Child, Ibid., 500.

In keeping with the logic of Constantinian models, that of generating and perpetuating values for the unification of society, immigrants to Alberta were expected and even coerced to attend the fully-funded, state-controlled public schools and thereby to *assimilate* into the majority vision of moral, Anglo-Protestant, progressive citizens. The only other option for immigrants was to opt out of these common schools and to *isolate* in unregistered, non-funded, private schools. Only the political strength of French Catholics in Quebec forced the Canadian Government, in the 1905 Alberta Act, to give Roman Catholics a weak form of exemption from this assimilation/isolation school structure in the form of fully funded separate schools. The essential ingredients of this Constantinian model of school system are still operative in Alberta today. While the assimilation goal of this system has shifted and mutated over the years—from producing a moral, Anglo-Protestant person to producing free, value-creating individuals today—the fundamental Constantinian model, with its coercive assimilatory mechanisms, are still largely the same as those established during the battle over Catholic schooling between 1885-1905. In spite of the assimilation pressures brought to bear by this model, however, Catholic schools continue to survive and celebrate their Catholic identity, as an Edmonton billboard recently (2002) proclaimed about Catholic schools: "*Embraced by Faith. Inspired! to Learn*."