Hard Times Force Closing of Catholic Schools in Winnipeg

Pressure of hard times will force the closing in Winnipeg of the eight Roman Catholic parochial grade schools and portions of two others at the end of the year. More than 2,500 children are involved in the decision, which was announced by His Excellency Mgr. Alfred A. Sinnott, archbishop of Winnipeg, in a letter to Mayor Webb Monday.

For more than 40 years, the archbishop recalled, these schools have been maintained in connection with the Roman Catholic parishes of the city, financial support coming from their church. The strain of that support, the archbishop reports with regret, has now become intolerable.

Archbishop Sinnott requested the mayor to communicate the decision to the school board, in view of the action it will be necessary to take.

Archbishop Sinnott and Mayor R. H. Webb met Tuesday afternoon, and talked the situation over, but reported afterwards that there was nothing to be said. Archbishop Sinnott said that the matter was finished as far as he was concerned, in notifying the city authorities that the schools can no longer be kept open. Mayor Webb said that a conference had been held, but that he was not in a position yet to add anything to what had appeared in the newspapers. He might have a statement to make this morning, he added.

W. R. Milton, chairman of the board, said Monday night that the public schools stood ready to receive the new pupils who might be expected. "We will be glad to do so," he said, "their parents are taxpayers, and they have the same rights and privileges as other children." He foresaw little difficulty in accommodating them. Accommodation is available, he said, and a slight addition to the teaching staff would be all that is necessary. This opinion was confirmed by other members of the board.

Mayor Webb expressed his personal regret regarding the closing of the Roman Catholic schools, but hoped that with the return of more favorable times, they could be reopened in the near future.

"In spite of what happens, the pupils attending these schools must receive their education," he said. Primarily, they are the responsibility of the Winnipeg school board, and the board must devise some way of providing facilities to enable them to carry on their studies."

The situation, he said, might be met by taking over the accommodation in the Catholic schools if sufficient class room space could not be provided in the Winnipeg public schools.

The mayor saw little possibility of the board making a grant to the Catholic organization in order that the parochial schools could be carried on as usual. Under the School act, he belived, grants to private schools of this type were illegal.

Asked why the archbishop would write to him about the intention of the Catholic body to close its schools, the mayor replied that he could give no explanation other than that as he was the mayor, the archbishop considered he should be acquainted with the situation.

The majority of the parents of the children were taxpayers and they were entitled to as much service as other citizens, he felt. If they wanted to send their children to the public schools they had a right to do so.

School Population

The present number of pupils in the Winnipeg public school system is 38,000. Teachers number 1,028.

More than 70 sisters of various Catholic orders, who have been teaching in the Catholic schools, may find themselves without occupation as teachers, and will probably be withdrawn to their mother houses and redistributed as need arises.

The decision, the archbishop said, to close the parochial schools was only reached when every possible avenue by which they might be maintained had been explored, and it had become apparent that in the present distressed times, nothing remained to be done but to relieve the Catholic body of the cost of educating the children of Catholic families.

The schools affected are:

St. Mary's, on St. Mary's avenue, a ten-roomed brick school with 401 pupils from grades 1 to 10, and with a staff of 13 sisters of the Holy Name society.

St. Ignatius school, on Jessie avenue, between Stafford and Harrow, where 400 children to the eighth grade are taught by a staff of eight sisters of the Holy Name.

St. Edward's, Arlington street, with 360 children to grade eight, and a staff of 11 sisters of the order of Our Lady of Missions.

The Immaculate Conception school, on Austin street, with 270 children and a teaching staff of 10 sisters of the Holy Name.

The Holy Ghost school, on Selkirk avenue, with 240 pupils and a teaching staff of four sisters of the Benedictine order.

St. Joseph's, on College street, with 311 pupils and a teaching staff of seven sisters of St. Joseph's order.

The Sacred Heart school, on McDermot avenue, with 200 children and nine teachers of the Holy Name.

St. John Cantius school, on Burrows avenue, with 100 pupils and three sisters of the Benedictine order.

In addition there are 150 children at St. Joseph's orphanage, on Portage avenue, with a teaching staff of four Grey Nuns, and also about 150 children in the lower grades at St. Mary's academy.

The total involved is 2,582. Archbishop Sinnott pointed out Tuesday that each of these parochial schools had been conducted exactly along the line of the Winnipeg public school board. Only the half hour daily allowed for religious instruction by law had been used for that instruction in these schools, and the same curriculum and text books as were used in the public schools were also used in the Roman Catholic parochial schools. Teachers, while sisters of various religious orders, were all qualified teachers with precisely the same training as in the public schools, while pupils took exactly the same examinations in all subjects as prescribed for the public schools.

"Were it not," he said, "for the zeal and devotion of the teaching sisters, it would not have been possible to have continued the Catholic schools for so long a period. It requires about $30 per pupil to educate a child in the Catholic school as compared with the figure of $84.65 per pupil for a year in the elementary or intermediate grades in the public schools, this being the figure recently given out by the public school board."

He declined to comment further on the situation other than to say he had been obliged to come to his present decision with the deepest regret but with the feeling that no other course was open to him.

Milton Undisturbed

W. R. Milton, chairman of the school board, was asked what attitude the board would take when the 2,400 children from the ten parochial schools were transferred to the care of the board. Mr. Milton was not disturbed at the prospect, and expressed the conviction that the board would deal with the new situation at once in a satisfactory way. He said in part:

"Many hundreds of Roman Catholic children, in all parts of the city, at the present time are coming for admission to the city schools from day to day, and all are received, and given a place.

"If all the children now under instruction in Catholic private schools ask for admission to our schools, we will undertake to receive them. Their parents are taxpayers, and they have the same rights and privileges as the children now in our public schools.

"More than that, we will be happy and glad to receive them," Mr. Milton continued. "Where I was brought up in Scotland, we were all in school together, played together and sat together. It will be a pleasure to me to know that the children in Winnipeg are all being educated together, as many of them, Catholic and Protestant, are being educated together at the present time.

Considers Details

Asked regarding finance, school accommodation, additional teachers, etc., Mr. Milton took down the files of statistics, giving the names of the schools, the number of teachers, the number of enrolled pupils, the average attendance from week to week, and other data of a comprehensive character.

In effect the chairman said that he thought that in the existing seventy public schools the board would be able to find room for almost all, if not quite all, the pupils now in the Catholic private schools. The children who would be taken over were for the most part in the younger classes and the present pressure in the city schools was in the upper grades. Going through the list, he picked out the area of the St. Edward's church. In that parish there is a new brick school, which might be obtained if suitable arrangements were concluded. This was, however, a matter for future consideration, and the need might not arise.

May Enlarge Staff.

With reference to an increase in the number of teachers, Mr. Milton was of opinion that it might be necessary to make a few additions to the staff. The representatives of the Catholic church might desire that some of their present staff be taken over with the pupils. This could not be done in the case of any teacher, he said, who lacked the regular Normal school provincial certificate. Also, it would be impossible for any teacher in the city school to wear the dress of the Catholic sisters. In the regular work of the city schools, the question of religious faith was never asked and there was no discrimination on these grounds, the only item considered being that of efficiency.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S LETTER

Archbishop's House,
353 St. Mary's Avenue,
Winnipeg, Dec. 9, 1932.

To His Worship,
Col. R. H. Webb,
Mayor of Winnipeg.

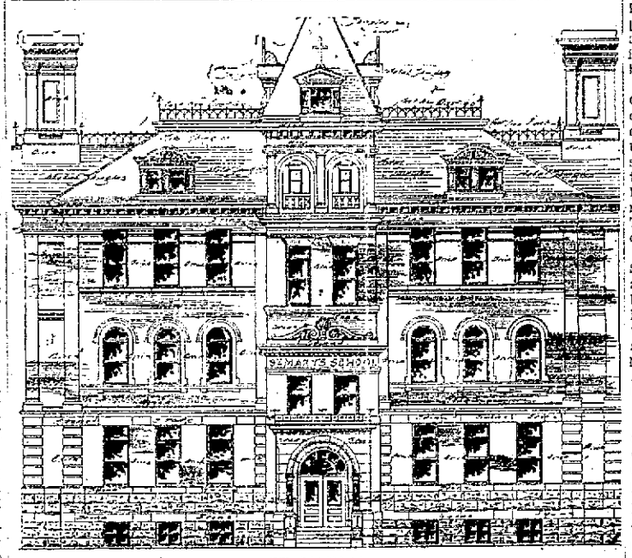
Your Worship,—It is my very painful duty to announce to you that, at the end of the current year, we shall be compelled to close the parochial schools which for more than forty years have been carried on in connection with the Catholic parishes of Winnipeg. I need not tell you that we have come to this decision after much hesitation and with the deepest regret; and I need not add that, were it humanly possible to do otherwise, we would still be prepared to make any sacrifice. The facts are only too evident and conclusive, that the strain for support of our parochial schools has become intolerable, and I am forced, very reluctantly indeed, to give my sanction to the decision which I am now making known to you.

Would you kindly communicate this to the public school board, that they may take whatever action may be deemed necessary in the circumstance. Somewhat more than 2,000 children are affected by this change.

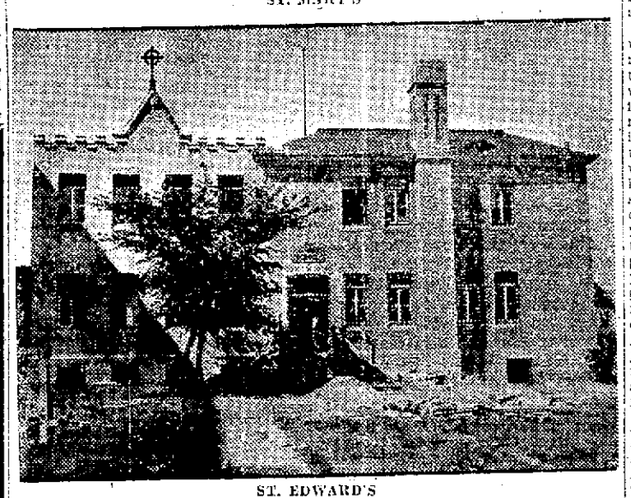
The Catholic people of Winnipeg have not maintained their schools, over so long a period and at great sacrifice, without a conviction that is at once very deep and very sincere. You can understand what a wrench it is to them and to me to be obliged to close them.

Very faithfully yours,
ALFRED A. SINNOTT,
Archbishop of Winnipeg.

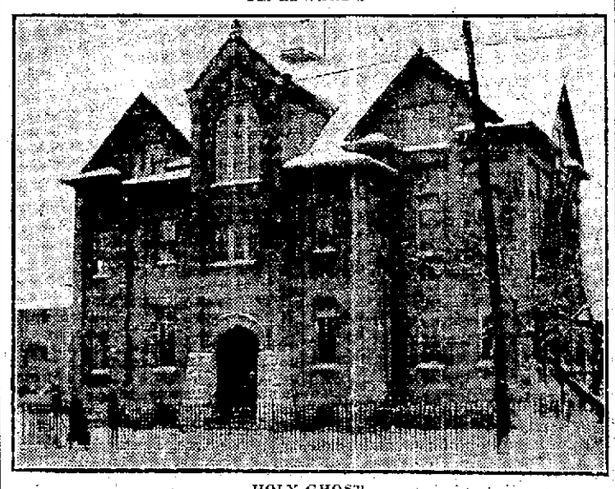
SCHOOLS TO CLOSE



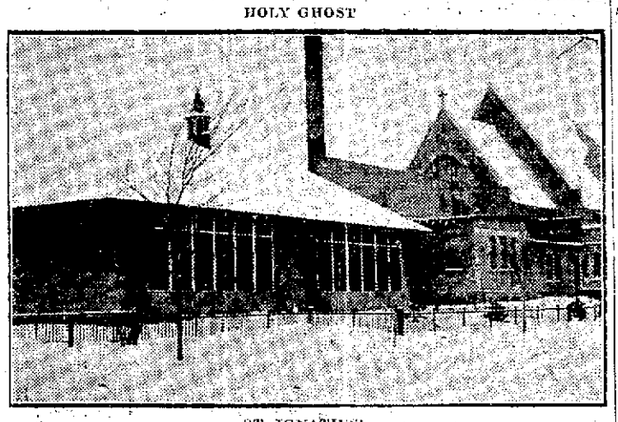
ST. MARY'S



ST. EDWARD'S



HOLY GHOST



ST. IGNATIUS'

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Parochial Schools Were Successors to Original Catholic Institutions

The Roman Catholic system of parochial schools, maintained by voluntary contributions, which is to disappear at the end of the year, as foreshadowed in Archbishop Sinnott's letter to Mayor Webb, is the successor to the corporation known as "The School Trustees for the Catholic School District for Winnipeg No. 1," which ceased to have legal existence on May 1, 1890, when the Public Schools act, passed at the preceding session of the legislature, came into effect. Upon the same date the Protestant school district also went out of existence and the two bodies were merged in the Winnipeg public school district, which has ever since had charge of the education of the young in Winnipeg.

The Public Schools act passed by the legislature at the instance of the Greenway government abolished the system of education established by the Manitoba legislature at its first session in 1871, which provided for a double system of education, Catholic and Protestant; and replaced it by a system of non-sectarian national schools.

The validity of the new law was at once challenged by the Catholics. Winnipeg by bylaws 480 and 483 undertook to make a joint levy for taxes for the public schools upon both Catholics and Protestants. An application was made to the court of Queen's Bench to quash the bylaws on the ground that the law authorizing them was beyond the power of the legislature.

The appeal to the courts was taken in the name of J. K. Barrett, a leading Catholic layman of the city. In his application Mr. Barrett set forth the facts upon which it was based:

There had been for some years a corporation known as the Catholic school district for Winnipeg; it had established a number of schools; to one of these schools, St. Mary's on Hargrave street, the applicant sent his children; notwithstanding the passage of the act this school was still in operation; the manner in which taxes were being levied contributed an injustice to the Catholic minority; therefore the bylaws should be set aside.

The entering of this action in October, 1890, was the beginning of the famous Manitoba school case, which occupied the attention of courts, legislatures and parliaments for years; and before it came to its close changed the course of politics in Canada.

Carried Through Courts

The case of Barrett vs. Winnipeg was carried through all the courts to the privy council. The first judgment by Mr. Justice Killam, Nov. 24, 1890, dismissed the application. Mr. Justice Killam found that "it was quite competent for the legislature to abolish the system of separate schools which it had established and leave the parties to recur to their voluntary denominational schools." This judgment was upheld by the court of queen's bench in term in February, and an appeal was then taken to the supreme court of Canada; and in October, 1891, this court issued a judgment quashing the bylaws on the grounds of illegality. The case was then carried to the judicial committee of the privy council, which, in July, 1892, made its noted finding in favor of the constitutionality of the act.

This decision ended the litigation proper; but a second line of attack upon the School act was opened up by the political demand that the Dominion parliament intervene and pass over-riding legislation under the authority of the constitution. This issue, essentially political, was settled by the general election of 1896.

While the case of Barrett vs. the City of Winnipeg was passing from court to court the Catholic schools of Winnipeg were maintained by voluntary contributions as parochial schools. The right of the Catholics to maintain these schools on this basis was approved in every judgment adverse to the Barrett claim. Thus it was stated in the judgment of the judicial committee:

"Notwithstanding the Public Schools Act of 1890 Roman Catholics and members of every other religious body in Manitoba are free to establish schools throughout the province; they are free to maintain their schools according to their own religious tenets without molestation or interference. No child is compelled to attend a public school."

Establishes Schools

Under this protection, the Roman Catholic church authorities in cooperation with the laity have been carrying on a complete system of primary education by means of a series of parochial schools. Some of these—St. Mary's for instance—have been continuously in operation since the date when the sectarian school system was replaced by the present system of public schools.

For many years, however, there were periodic protests by the minority against this condition of things. In 1902 Archbishop Langevin carried on a vigorous campaign in favor of the restoration of minority privileges. On April 13 he issued a pastoral letter dealing with the question in which parish priests were instructed not to admit Catholic children attending non-Catholic schools to the first communion without his permission. Later in the year he issued a number of protests through the medium of the Quebec press urging his compatriots to bring pressure to bear upon the Dominion government to obtain the removal of the disability to which the minority objected. Speaking at Ottawa on Dec. 2 he pointed out, as an injustice, that the Catholics of Winnipeg had to maintain their own schools and also pay $10,000 a year in taxes to the public schools.

In 1903, perhaps as a result of this campaign, an attempt was made to bring about the taking over of the parochial schools by the Winnipeg school board. This effort was strongly backed. The Conservative government of the province was understood to be privately sympathetic, while from Ottawa Sir Wilfrid Laurier used his very considerable influence with his friends in Winnipeg to help forward a settlement upon a basis of compromise. Negotiations began in March with an informal approach to the school board by the Catholic committee and went on for months; but ultimately they broke down. The scope of the proposed compromise and the reason for the final failure were never made public in detail; but it was generally understood that it was not found possible to reconcile Archbishop Langevin's requirements with the concessions the school board were prepared to offer. Some ten years later changes in the school law that were designed to make a merger of the two systems possible were suggested by the government of the day, but nothing came of the proposal.

Since that time there has been no change or, so far as the records show, any suggestion of change in the situation and the two systems of schools have existed side by side.

Appeal Is Denied

Washington, Dec. 14. — An appeal of Chicago sportsmen that the Illinois duck season be extended one day to permit them to shoot water fowl to give the poor, was commended in purpose Tuesday by Arthur Hyde, United States secretary of agriculture, but denied as "discriminatory." Hyde suggested that Thursday — which is the last day of the season — be used.

Approve Payment to Mexico of $30,000 for Killing

Washington, Dec. 14. — The United States house of representatives foreign affairs committee Tuesday unanimously approved a bill to pay the Mexican government $30,000 as an "act of grace" for the killing by Oklahoma deputy sheriffs of two relatives of ex-President Ortiz Rubio.

The bill provides for payment of $15,000 each to the Mexican government for the families of Emilio Cortez Rubio and Manuel Gomez, students killed June 7, 1931.

By E. K. CARTER

RESIDENCE AUCTION SALE

Cosy Bungalow Furniture and Effects

At the Residence, 29 INKSTER BLVD. (Take Cathedral Bus to Inkster and Scotia), on

Wed., Dec. 14

At 2 p.m. Sharp.

Instructed by the owners, who are leaving for England, I will sell the contents of their residence, as follows: Modern bungalow dining-room suite in oak, almost new bureau desk in walnut, 7-tube Atwater-Kent electric radio, book shelves, quantity of nice books, including Harmsworth encyclopedia and 150 other volumes, polychrome bridge lamp, tapestry chesterfield and chair, small rug, Moffat electric range, English china dinner service, Singer electric portable sewing machine, pictures, nice orthophonic gramophone, 50 records, Simmons and brass beds complete, walnut dressers, radio lamp, stools, Hoover electric vacuum sweeper (like new) with attachments, child's rot. china cabinet, porcelain-top table and chairs, kitchen linoleums and pans, glow heater, child's tricycle, lawn mower and hose and tools, small power emery wheel and saw, mitre saw, Stanley plane and other tools and the usual odds and ends of a nice home.

Terms: Cash at Sale.

EDWARD K. CARTER
Phone 87 100. Auctioneer.

By T. W. KILSHAW

AUCTION SALE OF

High Class Household Furniture, Player Piano, etc.

AT KILSHAW'S,
Canada Building, Donald Street,

Wednesday, Dec. 14

2 p.m.

Comprising: Extra fine chesterfield suites, dining-room suite in solid walnut, breakfast suite, New Scale Williams player piano, Mason & Risch bungalow piano, oak and walnut dressers, occasional chairs and tables, Singer sewing machine, table and standard lamps, Singer electric sewing machine, rugs and linoleum, odd furniture and tables, kitchen cabinet, electric ranges, electric washers, quantity bric-a-brac and articles too numerous to mention.

If you have articles to dispose of Call 29 040, and get T. W. KILSHAW.
Res. Ph. 73 113. Auctioneer.
Main Floor, Canada Building.

By H. J. GRAY

AUCTION SALE OF

Household Furniture

Three Wardrobes, Gate-leg Table, Flat-top Desk, 2 Chesterfield Sets, Toys, Etc., at GRAY'S AUCTION MART, 259 SMITH ST.

on

Wednesday, Dec. 14

at 2 o'Clock.

Instructed by the owners I will sell as follows: 2 very fine chesterfield sets, 6 davenettes, odd easy chairs, centre tables, floor lamps, walnut gate-leg table, plate-glass door wardrobe, 2 combination chiffoniers and wardrobes, oak flat-top desk, buffets, tables and several sets of chairs, drop-leaf tables, cupboards and sideboards, walnut chiffonier, dressers, steel beds (complete), drop-side couches, bedroom tables, linoleum, and a host of other household goods.

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H. J. GRAY.
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"Sell It By Auction."

By E. W. McLean

AUCTION SALE OF

70 to 80 HORSES

THURSDAY, Dec. 15th

At 11 a.m.

SPECIAL THIS WEEK:—One carload mixed farm horses from Holland, Man.; one carload heavy lumber horses, also about 35 other horses from various owners; 2 Shetland ponies; 5 cows; 5 farm harness; 3 farm sleighs; camp blankets, etc.
Terms Cash. Private Sales Daily.

McLEAN'S SALE STABLES
Cor. Arlington and Alexander.
Please note sale starts 11 o'clock a.m.

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Saskatchewan Lady Still Feels Real Young at Fifty.

Mrs. D. S. Newton, Has Always Used Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Kinistino, Sask. — (Special) — "I have used Dodd's Kidney Pills for many years for lame back, bladder trouble and rheumatism, and they always help me," writes Mrs. D. S. Newton, a well-known resident of this place. "I am fifty years old and still feel real young, thanks to using your Dodd's Kidney Pills. My mother and father always used them."

You have no idea what a difference Dodd's Kidney Pills will make to you. They are great blood enrichers. When you consider they have been a household remedy for nearly half a century, and the thousands of women, men, also children, who have derived benefit from using them, you must be sure they are a good thing.

Dodd's Kidney Pills are sold by all druggists, or the Dodds Medicine Co., Ltd., Toronto 2, Ont.—Advt.

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