

Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

Manitoba Politics and Parties after Confederation

R. O. MacFarlane

Volume 19, numéro 1, 1940

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300202ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/300202ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (imprimé)

1712-9095 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

MacFarlane, R. O. (1940). Manitoba Politics and Parties after Confederation.
Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada, 19(1), 45–55.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/300202ar>

MANITOBA POLITICS AND PARTIES AFTER CONFEDERATION

By R. O. MACFARLANE
The University of Manitoba

The conquest of the Red River Settlement by Canada began with the arrival of the "fifth column," represented by John Christian Schultz and his ilk, in the early sixties. The region was taken into "protective custody" for Canada, by Wolseley, after the natives had "rebelled" by refusing to be conquered peacefully by McDougall and his staff. The influx of immigrants from Canada, and the shift from fur to grain for an export staple, completed the transition from the Red River Settlement to the Province of Manitoba.

This transition was much more gradual in its social, economic, and political manifestations than it was in a purely constitutional sense. The purpose of this paper is to show, in the first place, the steps by which the change took place in the political sphere, and in the second, that the motivation of the change was as much social and economic as it was racial or religious. When federal party lines replaced those of a local character in 1882, another aspect of the life of the old West was submerged in the colony of Canada.

Political parties are a curious combination of, first, persons banded together to achieve certain political objectives, and secondly, organizations to place certain groups in office, and to keep them there if possible. Most political parties originate with the former concept, and tend constantly toward the latter.

In Canada, if the idea of political platforms were dominant, it would be politically impossible to maintain a common organization for federal and provincial politics, and it would be equally impossible to achieve any real unity across the various economic sections of the country. Apart from the fields of immigration and agriculture, the British North America Act does not contemplate any spheres of concurrent jurisdiction. Every other subject must find its place under either Dominion or provincial jurisdiction. Obviously there are different aspects of the same subject which fall under different jurisdiction, but in general it can be said that what is *intra vires* of the province is *ultra vires* of the Dominion and *vice versa*.

Under this scheme of the division of legislative jurisdiction, to which is added an executive power just as rigidly divided, there seems to be little reason why a voter who supports party A in the federal field should support the same party in the provincial field. Certainly it is not because, in the case of the major parties at least, the policies of the federal and provincial representatives are alike. Organization rather than political ideas seems to be the explanation, although, as seen in the recent federal election, even organization can provide strange paradoxes.

When Manitoba entered Confederation political lines were vague and were drawn on local issues; party organization counted for little. It took just about a decade for the federal party organizations to realign completely the politics of Manitoba. Professor Martin suggests that after the fall of the Norquay government in 1887, "the control of public affairs passed to a

generation that knew not the Red River Settlement."¹ One might advance this date five years—to railway disallowance. By this time the conquest of the settlement which had been begun by Dr Schultz and his friends was complete. From then on Manitoba was a true child of Ontario, but it is well to remember that it was some years before the parentage was established beyond all reasonable doubt.

In some of the other provinces, especially in British Columbia, there was a corresponding struggle between local issues and federal party organization in claiming men's political allegiance.² But in Manitoba this issue was combined with the passing of political control from the hands of men who had made their living directly or indirectly from the fur trade to a new group, recently arrived in the province, whose economic welfare was bound up with agriculture.

The origins of the West are quite as distinctive in their own way as are those of the East. While the fur route of the North West Company was of great importance in linking the region north and west of the lakes with the St. Lawrence Valley, it should be remembered that after the union of the Companies the relative importance of this route declined, and until the establishment of connection with the American frontier at St. Paul, the Hudson Bay route made the Red River Valley a frontier of Great Britain just as much as of Canada. In the half-century prior to 1870, Red River acquired a distinct individuality of which its people were proud. When the old settlers were swamped by immigration from the East in the seventies, they fought hard to preserve something of their old way of life.³ But it was a losing battle, and one which was reflected in the issues fought out in the Legislature and on the hustings.

The term "Old Settler" is applied to those persons whose families came to Red River before the immigration from Canada began, say about 1860. It included three chief elements, the Hudson's Bay Company officials and dependents, the Métis, and the Kildonan settlers. All of these had a common denominator in the fur trade, either as traders, as *voyageurs*, or as producers of supplies required by the first two groups. These were the people who had supported the provisional government in 1869-70, especially its bill of rights, on which the Manitoba Act was virtually framed. They never were "rebels" in the strict sense of that term, but they objected to being annexed by Canada as a territory, and demanded the status of a province when they entered the union.⁴

The division between Old Settlers and New Settlers which had characterized the years just prior to the insurrection, gave way in part to a religious and racial division. It is easy, however, to over-emphasize this line of demarcation. For example, in the first Legislature there were two future premiers, John Norquay, an English-speaking breed and a Protestant, and H. J. H. Clarke, a Canadian Catholic from Quebec; in addition

¹Chester Martin, "Political History of Manitoba" (*Canada and its Provinces*, XIX, 121).

²F. W. Howay, *British Columbia; The Making of a Province* (Toronto, 1928), chaps. xxix-xxxi, xxxvi, xxxvii.

³*Manitoban*, Aug. 26, 1871, gives a criticism of the attitude which regarded Manitoba as a colony of Ontario.

⁴G. F. G. Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada* (London, 1936), 109-10, elaborates this view.

there were Edward Bourke, a Protestant half-breed, and J. H. McTavish, an English-speaking (*sic*) Catholic. These four men in a house of twenty-four, must have found it difficult to be on the right side in matters both of race and religion, and it might be suspected that their constituents returned them for some reason other than that of race and religion. The second Legislature of 1874, lent itself to classification somewhat better, although Angus McKay had English, Scottish, French, and Indian blood and was a Catholic in religion.

Much of the racial and religious bitterness was a by-product of the insurrection, and of the methods employed to crush it. From the Scott affair onward many of the newcomers to Manitoba were as much interested in punishing the French Catholics for an alleged wrong, as they were in extending the boundaries of the Dominion. This vindictiveness is illustrated by a note in the *Manitoban*, a staunch defender of the policy of conciliation pursued by Governor Archibald, and in general of the French interest in the new province: "We have seen the whole police force when it was at its largest, not only threatened, but chased like prairie chickens by a crowd of Wolseley's heroes, and their gaol broken open and their prisoners taken out without having the courage even to lodge a complaint."⁵

The amnesty question did even more than the insurrection itself to fan the flames of racial and religious animosity. On this issue many of the old settlers of Manitoba felt that they had been treated unjustly by the Dominion government, and that the most solemn promises that had been made in 1870 were broken three years later, in order to win the political support of the Orange element in Ontario. This was adding insult to injury.⁶ The *Manitoban* constantly sniped at those who kept the religious issue alive, even before the arrest of Lepine.⁷ The *Free Press*, which from the outset was much more favourable to the Ontario cause, considered the killing of Scott a murder and saw no reason why the perpetrators should not be punished, even if the consequence was racial strife in Manitoba.⁸

The arrest of Lepine on September 16, 1873, and the laying of a murder charge against him, brought racial and religious animosity to new heights. The *Manitoban* published an editorial attacking the warrant as one issued solely for political purposes.⁹ The *Free Press*, on the other hand, not only approved of the arrest, but proceeded to attack all and sundry who supported the accused. Even Bishop Taché came in for a good drubbing.¹⁰ When the trial which crowded everything else out of both local papers was over, the *Manitoban* accepted the verdict as the only possible one, but strongly upheld the plea for mercy on the ground that it was not wilful murder, but an action which was thought to be in the public interest under the Provisional government.¹¹

⁵*Manitoban*, Oct. 4, 1873.

⁶Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, chap. VIII is a very full discussion of this issue. For the point of view of the old settlers, see Mgr Taché, Archevêque de St. Boniface, *L'Amnistie*.

⁷*Manitoban*, April 15, 22, 1871; and Feb. 26, 1872.

⁸*Free Press*, weekly, Dec. 4, 1872; Feb. 8, 22, 1873; and May 17, 1873.

⁹*Manitoban*, Sept. 20, 1873.

¹⁰*Free Press*, March 21, 1874.

¹¹*Manitoban*, Oct. 31, 1874.

The reprieve of Lepine by Lord Dufferin produced the expected repercussions. The *Standard* (successor to the *Manitoban*) accepted it with little comment,¹² but the *Free Press* did not like it in the least, although it found it difficult to be more loyal than the Queen. "It was legally sound, but not morally."¹³ A mass meeting which was attended by about five hundred people also registered protest, and bitter editorial attacks continued for a month.¹⁴

The election of Riel for Provencher constituency, and his expulsion from the House after he had signed the roll, had the same effect in arousing racial passions.¹⁵ Other minor issues did the same thing. The *Manitoban* bitterly attacked the appointment of McKeagney to the bench in 1873, because he could not speak French,¹⁶ and a week later it attacked its competitor, by stating: "The consistent endeavours of the *Free Press* to set two equally loyal sections of our population by the ears by untruthful and uncalled for abuse, and the constant ripping up of old sores, deserves a severer name than mere folly."¹⁷

In 1874 the *Free Press* began an attack on the use of French as an official language in the province. It pointed out that the provincial government was just a tool of the French element in the population so long as the two languages were on the same footing, and that great reductions in expenditure could be made if only English were used officially.¹⁸ The *Manitoban* came back with a defence of French on constitutional and equitable grounds: "The days of Agincourt and Crecy are obsolete, and we doubt if a dozen persons could be found in this country who would be desirous of seeing an injustice done to any of their countrymen simply because they belonged to a different race and spoke the Gallic language."¹⁹ The *Free Press* continued its attacks, however, until it finally won its point, although not until 1890, and bilingualism, another link with the old West, was broken.²⁰

In administration there was always an attempt to maintain a balance between the races. While M. A. Girard was the only premier whose first language was French, three out of the first four men to hold the office were Catholic.²¹ Most offices held by appointment were divided on a racial basis, and any changes produced a howl from the disappointed group.²²

In addition to the racial and religious differences there was also a good deal of anti-Canadian sentiment. This was a natural heritage of the insurrection and the method by which the province entered Confederation. This sentiment was by no means confined to the French and the Catholic groups.

¹²*Standard*, April 24, 1875.

¹³*Free Press*, Jan. 19, 1875.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, Jan. 22, 30, Feb. 9, 1875.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, April 4, 18, 25, May 2, 1875.

¹⁶*Manitoban*, July 5, 1873.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, July 12, 1873.

¹⁸*Free Press*, Sept. 4, 7, 21, 1874.

¹⁹*Manitoban*, Oct. 3, 1874.

²⁰*Free Press*, Oct. 10, 1874; March 11, April 9, 1875.

²¹Alfred Boyd, Sept. 1870 to Dec. 1871, was a Protestant; he was succeeded by Girard, Clark, and Davis. John Norquay who became Premier in October, 1878, was, of course, a Protestant, but had blood connections with the Métis, and was the only native of the province ever to become premier.

²²*Manitoban*, June 24, 1871; Jan. 21, April 27, 1872.

Among the old Kildonan families, and especially in St. John's parish, the old Red River tradition died hard. The *Manitoban* reflects on almost every page the view of these people. They accepted Confederation but they were not very happy about it. When issues arose between the province and the Dominion, this group formed a nucleus for provincial rights sentiment. This attitude cannot be explained on any racial or religious basis, because these people were Protestant and English speaking. Its immediate explanation was opposition to the "Canadian party" represented by Schultz, but it had a more fundamental reason in the passing of an old economy based on fur, and the inevitable readjustment to a new type of agriculture. Without a religious and racial barrier to overcome, however, these people made the transfer to the new economy more easily than did, say, the Métis. In a little more than a decade their readjustment was almost complete, and through mixing with the incoming immigrants from the East, they became a part of the new society, except for very small groups whose eyes still turned backward rather than forward.

The strongest evidence of the racial division of Manitoban politics after Confederation is provided by the manner in which the province was divided into constituencies for the first provincial election. The twelve thousand people in the province were settled on river lots along the Red and the Assiniboine. The enumerators, one French and one English, made independent reports, on the basis of which twenty-four electoral divisions were set up, twelve of each nationality.²³

Once this division had been made, it became the interest of the French group to maintain the *status quo*. Although the French were about equal to the English-speaking group at the outset, immigration soon upset the balance.²⁴ Naturally the French were bitter opponents of any principle of representation by population, and they were assisted in maintaining this position by two important factors. Sir George E. Cartier was interested in maintaining a French-Canadian balance of power in Manitoba, and he persuaded two or three influential men to move to the province to take up the political cudgels for him. Most important among these were Joseph Royal, Joseph Dubuc, and H. J. H. Clarke. The first named founded the newspaper *Le Métis*, which was very influential among the French-speaking element. Governor Archibald, interested in restoring harmony among the factions in Manitoba, found that these men were useful to his cause, and showed them many courtesies, which not only won their support, but completely alienated Schultz and the Canadian party.

If Schultz had played his cards well he could easily have lined up all the English-speaking groups against the French. But such a policy would require some compromise with both the English half-breeds and the Kildonan people. Compromise was not one of Schultz's strong points and the opportunity was lost. The result was that the pro-French group held office for several years after their numerical strength ceased to justify such

²³*Manitoba Gazette*, extra, Dec. 13, 1870. John L. Holmes, "Factors affecting Politics in Manitoba; a Study of Provincial Elections, 1870-99," a master's thesis presented at the University of Manitoba in 1936, elaborates this point. The writer is indebted to Mr Holmes for his kind permission to use this material, especially the constituency maps which he has prepared.

²⁴*Manitoban*, Dec. 10, 1870.

a situation.²⁵ In the first provincial election the Canadian group found itself opposed by all the others, although the union was a very loose one. The result was that Schultz himself was defeated, and only five of his supporters were returned in a House of twenty-four. It is interesting to note that the Hudson's Bay Company used its influence to oppose Schultz, which suggests again that there were motives other than race and religion in the campaign. The French element, because of its allies among the English-speaking group, had definitely won the first round of the conflict, and economic as well as racial factors had played a part in that victory.²⁶

The government composed of these various groups, and completely devoid of any party organization, found it impossible to maintain any party discipline, except through dispensing the patronage of which, in a province of 12,000 people, there was a rather limited amount. Internal quarrels soon developed and Premier Clarke was defeated in the House on a redistribution bill. The French, who had been regarded as the bulwark of the Premier's support, deserted him with the exception of Joseph Royal, whose allegiance was spasmodic.²⁷

R. A. Davis, proprietor of a flourishing hotel and saloon in Winnipeg, succeeded to the premiership.²⁸ He brought in a new redistribution bill which gave the English fourteen of the twenty-four seats, on the plea that the English population was increasing more quickly than the French and that the rapidly growing sections in the west of the province were under-represented. The real motive was to provide an English-speaking majority which could form a strong government. The passing of this Act, which was used for the election of 1874, meant the end of French domination. Henceforth the best the French could hope for was to obtain a balance of power which would enable them to protect their interests, and the worst was that their rearguard action should fail, and their rights be trampled by the majority. While the racial issue continued to be important for some years, it was not an attempt by the French to control, but rather to avoid being swallowed up in the ever-increasing English population.²⁹

The four years of the Davis régime beginning in 1874 have been described as a period of attempts at co-operation between the French and English.³⁰ It might equally well be said to be merely a good illustration of the vagaries of Manitoba politics which resulted from a lack of organized parties. Although Davis was elected by the anti-French group he soon found his support coming from the French members, and the opposition was left stranded. Just when the opponents of Mr Davis thought they were making progress against him, their leader John Norquay was taken into the administration and they had to begin from scratch again. The abolition of the Legislative Council, which might well have been regarded by the French as additional security for their rights, was pledged by the Davis government. Although the Council itself blocked the first attempt

²⁵R. O. MacFarlane, "A Law Abiding Rebel" (*Manitoba Arts Review*, I, no. 3, 25).

²⁶*Manitoban*, Jan. 7, 1871.

²⁷*Manitoba, Journals of the Legislative Assembly*, Nov. 8, 1873.

²⁸See *Free Press*, Dec. 29, 1874, for a particularly bitter attack on Davis, casting reflection on his means of livelihood.

²⁹*Free Press*, Sept. 21, Dec. 23, 1874; March 11, 1875.

³⁰Holmes, "Factors affecting Politics in Manitoba," 18.

to do away with it, in 1876 even some of the French members supported the bill which abolished the Upper House.³¹

The redistribution bill of 1877 showed the way the political wind was blowing, and it marked another step in the decline of French influence. Immigration had been pouring into the province, and although the principle of representation by population was not accepted, the newcomers were admitted as an "interest" in reallocating the seats. Eight went to the French, eight to the "English speaking natives," and eight to the newcomers.³² This admission of the different interests of old and new settlers as well as of racial division, illustrates once again that it was not only the French who did not welcome whole-heartedly the people from the East, and that there were forces in Manitoba politics other than race and religion.

The last three years of the Davis government (1875-8) saw the political temperature of the province return to something like normal. The administrative record of the government was reasonably good, and time was wearing the edges off many of the more violent prejudices. "The desire of the French to protect their privileges, and the English wish to avenge the death of Thomas Scott, were coming into contact with the dynamic force of immigration. The effect of immigration could be seen in the electoral redistribution, the newspapers, and in the social and economic life of the Province."³³ In short, the Red River Settlement was being inundated by the people who were rapidly making a new province for the Dominion.

John Norquay succeeded Davis as premier in 1878. He included two French members in his Cabinet, and endeavoured to preserve the existing situation as far as the racial division was concerned. He was dependent on the French for much of his support, and the opposition was belligerently English in its policy, especially on the question of redistribution of seats in the Legislature. After a session in which things went reasonably smoothly for the government, Joseph Royal, the leader of the French and a member of the government, endeavoured to undermine Norquay's position, by advocating a double majority principle on a racial basis. This was unacceptable to the Premier, and he called a caucus of the English members who drew up a series of resolutions deprecating the influence of the French in the province, proposing to abolish the printing of public documents in French, and advocating representation by population.³⁴ The French members of the government then resigned. After a preliminary bout with the Lieutenant-Governor, Cauchon, who was naturally sympathetic to the French, Norquay weathered the storm, making up in English support what he had lost in French. This is another illustration of the vagaries of the racial basis of politics at this time, but the French were none the less excluded from the government.

The reconstructed government proceeded to pass its redistribution bill. It recognized the rapid growth of new settlements and provided for twelve of the twenty-four seats going to this section of the population. The remainder were divided equally among the French- and English-speaking

³¹*Manitoba, Journals of the Legislative Assembly*, Jan. 26, 1876.

³²*Ibid.*, 1877, 100; 1879, 62-3.

³³Holmes, "Factors affecting Politics in Manitoba," 28.

³⁴*Manitoba, Journals of the Legislative Assembly*, 1879, 46.

groups of old settlers.³⁵ In a sense this statute marks the passing of the old political order in Manitoba, because the constituents of half the members had no connection with the Red River Settlement. The attempt to abolish French printing was not so successful, for while it passed the Legislature, it was disallowed by the Governor-General-in-Council, and it was not until 1890 that a similar Act became law.

Norquay now made peace with the French, which he seemed to do with ease, on the ground that as a native he was a lesser evil than the recent arrivals in the province. He then dissolved the Legislature and went to the electorate in an era of good feeling. Only three of the twenty-four members returned were pledged to oppose the government and two of these called themselves independents. The fact was that there were neither issues nor party organizations in the province to carry on party government. The old issues of old *versus* new settlers, and of French *versus* English were lost under waves of immigration. Manitoba was becoming a part of Canada in a sense that had never been realized in 1870.³⁶

The Norquay government went through its first three sessions in a fashion more becoming a county council than a legislature. The extension of the western and northern boundaries of the province necessitated the addition of six new seats in 1881, and a second member was also provided for Winnipeg.³⁷ This measure did not provide the opposition that all earlier statutes for this purpose had done, and it looked as though the last issue on which parties might be formed on local issues had disappeared. Then came the railway issue and the federal disallowance of Manitoba's railway legislation, and the era of good feeling was at an end. Party politics came back, not on local issues, but on the basis of provincial rights, which in turn meant an alliance with the organized federal machines, depending on which party was in office at Ottawa.

While the issue which changed the political organization of Manitoba was precipitated suddenly, the factors which underlay the change were long standing, and nearly all arose out of the changing character of the population which in turn was a result of immigration, mostly from Ontario.

The cry of provincial rights which attained such importance in 1882 was by no means a new one. When the province was created there was strong opposition to the retention by the Dominion of control over the natural resources, and among the old settlers this grievance was not allayed.³⁸ The application of the Canadian tariff to a region that had enjoyed virtual free trade was also displeasing to many, and the fact that under the Manitoba Act the province was allowed to continue its own tariff rates until 1873, and then obtained an extension of a year, did not make the opposition disappear any more quickly.³⁹

There was a constant demand from the other elements in the population for "Better Terms." It was pointed out that the revenue collected in Manitoba by the federal government far exceeded its expenditures, in-

³⁵*Statutes of Manitoba*, 1879, 42 Vict., ch. 18.

³⁶The *Free Press* had pointed out the inevitability of this as early as 1873 (*Free Press*, weekly, Sept. 6, 1873).

³⁷*Statutes of Manitoba*, 1881, 44 Vict., ch. 12.

³⁸*Manitoba*, Dec. 16, 1871; March 15, 1873.

³⁹R. O. MacFarlane, "Manitoba Was a Free Trade Area" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, Aug. 3, 1938).

cluding the subsidy, in the province. This was felt to be a great burden on a young and small province which had a very heavy overhead to maintain. Unhappy contrasts were drawn between the terms granted to British Columbia and those virtually forced on Manitoba, because of the circumstances under which she entered Confederation. The *Manitoban* was particularly persistent in its demand that the Dominion do more for the province.⁴⁰

The attitude of the *Free Press* toward Dominion-provincial relations reflects the view of a large section of the population, especially those people who came from Ontario after 1870. In his first editorial the editor announced that "In Canadian [Dominion] matters we shall take an especial interest. The unity of the Dominion, it will be one of our prime objects to maintain; and to aid in cementing more closely the ties that bind the Confederation of Provinces together, will be one of our steadfast aims. . . . We have no sympathy with those who would have the people of Manitoba believe that with Dominion politics this province has less to do than other members of Canada."⁴¹ This is certainly the view of the conqueror who has not been touched by local issues. Within a year, however, the editor felt obliged to criticize the Manitoba members of the federal House for failing to represent the interests of the province at Ottawa.⁴² By 1875 the *Free Press* had become a western sheet, attacking the dominance of Ontario and Quebec, under the head "Centralization." At the same time a demand was made for western representation in the Cabinet to protect the rights and interests of the West.⁴³ What happened to the *Free Press* also happened to many of the immigrants. They found that Ontario was too heavy to carry around with them indefinitely; they had conquered the West, but in so doing they had become part of it.

Party affiliations which were built up for federal elections had little influence on the provincial situation until 1879. In that year the *Winnipeg Daily Times*, a Conservative paper, offered to support the provincial government in the election campaign, if the government would support Sir John's National Policy. This paper tried to force its point by contending that most of the members of Norquay's Cabinet were Conservative in any case.⁴⁴ The *Free Press* which had other political connections in the federal field,⁴⁵ refused to admit that the Norquay government, which it supported, was Conservative. It pointed out in addition that there was not, and should not be, any common organization for federal and provincial matters. The latter, it insisted, should be settled on their merits as local issues. The *Times*, however, contended that the day when the two fields of politics could be separated was passed, and that national party lines were about to be drawn in Manitoba.⁴⁶ Both newspapers, it might be added, were as much interested in their own position in the community on this matter, as they were in the political consequences.

⁴⁰*Manitoban*, June 22, 1872; Jan. 11, 18, 25, April 11, 1873; *Standard*, Aug. 7, 1875; *Free Press*, Oct. 8, 1875.

⁴¹*Free Press*, weekly, Nov. 9, 1872.

⁴²*Ibid.*, May 31, 1873.

⁴³*Ibid.*, March 5, 1875.

⁴⁴*Winnipeg Daily Times*, April 12, 1879.

⁴⁵*Free Press*, weekly, Nov. 9, 1872.

⁴⁶Holmes, "Factors affecting Politics in Manitoba," 33-4; 39-40 discusses this point at length.

The political situation was brought to a head in the Legislature in 1882. Greenway, leader of the opposition, charged that the federal disallowance of Manitoba's railway legislation was an infringement of provincial rights.⁴⁷ Although the government withstood the opposition challenge, it was forced, in spite of Norquay's efforts, into a position which aligned it with the federal Conservative party. The Premier did not like the disallowance, but he was unwilling to break with the federal government over this issue, and he sought constantly to work out some compromise. The opposition, on the other hand, was not hampered by any desire to avoid a breach with Ottawa. In fact the Provincial Rights cry of the Liberals suited them very well, and soon they were as anxious to embarrass Macdonald as they were Norquay. Greenway needed some issue to hold his followers together, and also to appeal to the electorate at the forthcoming election. While the question of railway disallowance did not prove to be good fighting ground in the election of 1883, it won Mr. Greenway the support of the *Free Press*, which was soon to stand him in good stead, and it also established federal party lines in Manitoba. Henceforth Greenway was Liberal and Norquay was Conservative.⁴⁸

The election returns for the new constituencies created when the western boundary of the province was extended in 1881, list the candidates as Liberal and Conservative. These districts, however, were settled by people who had just arrived from the East, and these were their familiar party terms. It was not until the provincial election of 1883 that candidates throughout the province accepted the federal party names.⁴⁹ Once this had been done a common organization soon grew up and federal lines of demarcation were perpetuated in the province. Norquay, an old English-speaking settler fought hard to prevent the establishment of federal party divisions in the province, and his ability to conciliate various groups enabled him to do so for some years. But eventually the Canadianization of Manitoba politics was as complete as other aspects of the conquest. The old Red River traditions in politics as elsewhere were swallowed up in a new era.

The 1870's are a period of transition in Manitoban politics. At the beginning of the decade the Red River Settlement entered a union with the other provinces of Canada. At that time political power was in the hands of two chief groups, one English and the other French speaking. These groups had lived side by side for two generations and had evolved a *modus vivendi*. Then came the new immigrants from the East, not interested in the fur trade, as were most of the old settlers, but in agriculture. The heritage of the insurrection gave a natural basis for political division. But as the insurrection was not supported entirely by the French-speaking section of the population, neither was the policy that is commonly called that of the French and Catholics. There was still much of old settler *versus* new settler. With the growth of the province, and the influx of immigration, the old groups were swamped numerically. The English section found it easier to adjust itself to the new order than did the French, especially the Métis. Consequently, the latter element seemed to be more con-

⁴⁷*Manitoba, Journals of the Legislative Assembly*, 1882, 10 and 14.

⁴⁸*Free Press*, Jan. 1, 1883.

⁴⁹Holmes, "Factors affecting Politics in Manitoba," appendix A, 11-13.

stantly in opposition to the newcomers than their old neighbours, which is a partial explanation of why the issue so often seems to be racial and religious, rather than old *versus* new.

The Manitoba Act joined the Red River Valley to Canada, but it did not make it really of Canada. Immigration in the 1870's did this job; Ontario colonized Manitoba, and made it part of the Dominion in a sense that legislation could never have done. Local political issues gave way to those of a wider field. Federal party lines were drawn where formerly there had been loose provincial groups, with nothing vital to distinguish them once the racial and religious balance was upset. Apart from such unusual occasions as when railway disallowance or the School Question arose, party organization triumphed over issues in provincial politics.

While the old West was overrun by the newcomers from the East, the political ideas of the former did not perish. Slowly but surely the new settlers were converted from their old creed, and while they did not become exactly like the people whom they superseded, yet they soon developed an equally distinctive point of view. Herein is illustrated the transfer from the fur-trading to the agricultural frontier, different to be sure, but still a frontier.

Some evidence of the old West still remains, not extensive, but very real. In St. Boniface and other French-speaking communities whose connections with Quebec are remote, are to be found the monuments that are well known of the society that existed before 1870. More frequently forgotten is the fact that in St. John's, with its cathedral and its college, as well as its churchyard, in an occasional farmstead along the lower Red River, and in the Lower Fort, is to be seen another root of the West that did not have its origins in the East. But John Norquay was the last native-born Premier of Manitoba.

DISCUSSION

Mr Sage said that a useful parallel might be drawn between the events described in Mr MacFarlane's paper and a similar development in British Columbia, where the change had come twenty years later. It was 1903 before MacBride definitely accepted the Conservative Party standard in provincial affairs. In both provinces there had been opposition to the "Canadians": in British Columbia the settlers on Vancouver Island corresponded to the Red River settlers, in their attitude toward the newcomers. In both cases, the division between old settlers and new had given place to divisions corresponding to those in the federal political field.

Mr Stanley said that the paper had served a useful purpose in emphasizing the point that early political divisions in Manitoba were not based on racial issues. Both the English settlers and the English speaking half-breeds had associated themselves with Riel. It should be pointed out also, he said, that it was some time after 1870 before the number of white settlers in the province equalled the number of half-breeds.

Mr Masters suggested that the influence of the French group in Manitoba politics had not entirely disappeared in the 1880's. It extended even to the present time and has occasionally proved important, when political forces were evenly balanced.