

The School Question in the 1929 Saskatchewan Provincial Election

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In the turbulent years following the First World War, the Ku Klux Klan in the United States experienced a revival. The revived Klan was anti-Negro, anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish and anti-foreigner. Although the Klan originated in the deep South, by 1923 its "center and source of greatest power" was in the urbanized North, and with an estimated membership of five million was poised on the Canadian border.¹

During 1923 and 1924 a series of incendiary fires struck Catholic churches and property across Canada, including the Cathedral in Quebec, and public opinion ascribed them to the Klan. In the beginning of 1925 a Canadian Klan was founded in Toronto. The Klan was gaining momentum in southern Ontario when in June 1926, a few days after a Klan demonstration, the St. Mary's Catholic church in Barrie was dynamited.² The police were able to show that Klansmen had planned and carried out the dynamiting, and a combined effort by civic authorities, ecclesiastical bodies, and newspapers moved against the Klan in Ontario. Swamped on one hand by ridicule and on the other by revulsion because of the Barrie outrage, the Ku Klux Klan dropped in membership and from public view in Ontario.

The Ontario Klan organizers began to look for greener pastures and in the winter of 1926 Klan organizers crossed the Canadian Shield and entered Saskatchewan. The first Klan organizers in the province, Hugh Finlay "Pat" Emmons and Lewis A. Scott, were experienced Klan organizers from Indiana. It did not take them long to discover the local racial and religious prejudices

¹ Kenneth Earl HARRELL, "The Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana 1920-1930" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1966), p. 65.

² *Toronto Globe and Mail*, October 15, 1926, p. 1. "The Hon. Mr. Nickle and the Ku Klux Klan," *Toronto Saturday Night*, July 3, 1926, p. 1.

and to exploit them. Emmons later admitted that they simply “fed people ‘antis.’ Whatever we found that they could be taught to hate and fear, we fed them. We were out to get the dollars and we got them.”³ Emmons and Scott spent most of early 1927 crisscrossing Saskatchewan spouting Klan propaganda, burning crosses, selling memberships in the Klan at \$13 a head (of which they were permitted to retain half), and establishing local Klans in as many centers as would support one.⁴ In July and August of 1927, Emmons and Scott made one final sweep through Saskatchewan and then disappeared from the province taking with them the Klan funds.⁵

With the scandal caused by the sudden disappearance of Emmons and Scott the Klan in Saskatchewan should have lost its popularity; however, it floundered but survived. Two new figures, Dr. John H. Hawkins, a Klan organizer from Virginia who held a Doctorate in optometry, and J.J. Maloney, a one-time seminarian from Hamilton, Ontario who believed he had a mission to “denounce the errors of Romanism,”⁶ came into the scene. The Klan was reorganized and once again the search was begun for membership fees. Throughout 1928, Klan lecturers travelled around Saskatchewan and it is during this period that the Klan reached its moment of greatest prominence. Klan organizers claimed a membership of more than seventy thousand by the end of that year. While it is likely that this figure is greatly exaggerated, the Klan did raise nearly fifty thousand dollars from membership fees and other donations.⁷ Under Hawkins and Maloney the Klan became violently anti-Catholic and stirred up old prejudices and hatreds. The Klan came out against separate schools and campaigned for “one public school.”⁸ During

³ Hugh Finlay “Pat” Emons’ interview with Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, *Canadian Jewish Review*, June 15, 1928, p. 1.

⁴ Patrick KYBA, “Ballots and Burning Crosses—The Election of 1929,” in *Politics in Saskatchewan*, edited by Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Ltd., 1968), p. 108.

⁵ *Saskatoon Phoenix*, May 3, 1928, p. 3.

⁶ J.J. MALONEY, *Rome in Canada* (Vancouver: Protestant Publications, 1935), p. 141.

⁷ Irene H. McEWAN, “Religious and Racial Influences on a Senate Appointment, 1931,” *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, Winter, 1972, p. 19.

⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, May 8, 1928, p. 5.

1928 three issues came to the fore: crucifixes on public school walls, nuns teaching in public schools, and the teaching of French in public schools. The Klan made it clear that the roots of the “school question” were in Quebec, and J.J. Maloney noted that, “All our troubles, all the sedition, plotting and plans against the school system are hatched in Quebec.”⁹

In view of this growing agitation, the school question could not but emerge as a political issue. The Liberal party led by James Gardiner continued their traditional policy of defending separate school privileges and maintaining the minimum amount of French permitted by the law. The Conservatives, on the other hand, were quick to capitalize on the growing discontent and called for nonsectarian public schools.¹⁰ Their leader, Dr. J.T.M. Anderson, was a former school inspector and a staunch advocate of the “primacy of the English language in the schools of the province.”¹¹

Before outlining and analyzing the school question in the 1929 provincial election it is necessary to summarize the historical background and examine the impact and implications of separate school legislation in Saskatchewan.

The inauguration of Saskatchewan as a province took place in September 1905. An election was called for December, and Walter Scott and his Liberals won sixteen of the twenty-five seats. One result of this election was that Saskatchewan politics took on a religious and ethnic connotation. Prior to the election Scott and the Liberal party pledged “that as long as we remain in power no regulation will be altered nor anything done which will destroy or modify the purely national character of our schools, separate or public.”¹² They committed themselves “to maintain absolute public control of every school to continue the system of uniform text books, uniform training and qualification of teachers, uniform inspection for every separate and public school alike.”¹³

Frederick Haultain, the former territorial premier who had been passed over in the choice of government head for the new province, established a

⁹ *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, January 11, 1929, p. 1.

¹⁰ Raymond J. HUEL, “The Teaching of French in Saskatchewan Public Schools,” *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, Winter, 1971, p. 23.

¹¹ HUEL, “The Teaching of French in Saskatchewan Public Schools,” p. 23.

¹² *Regina Leader*, November 21, 1905, p. 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Provincial Rights party. Haultain protested that the provincial autonomy terms invaded the rights of the new provinces. He objected specifically to the federal government's retention of Saskatchewan's national resources and the separate school guarantees. On the separate school question Haultain made it clear "that the only safety for our educational system lies in once and for all establishing it on an absolute national basis, with equal rights for all and special privileges to none."¹⁴

Prior to the election a letter written by Archbishop Langevin of Saint Boniface was circulated among the clergy denouncing the Provincial Rights party's stand on the separate schools.¹⁵ As a consequence Haultain's support for national schools and Archbishop Langevin's intervention solidified Catholic support for Scott and the Liberal party. The lasting consequence of this election was that the Liberal party became identified in the minds of many protestants with the Catholic and "foreign speaking" communities while the Conservative party, the heir of the Provincial Rights party, became identified with the Anglo-Protestants.¹⁶

Among the provisions of the Saskatchewan Act which established the new province was a guarantee to minorities in Saskatchewan of the rights and privileges respecting education which they already enjoyed under the North West Territories Ordinance of 1901. These gave to the minority in a district, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, the right to organize a separate school district. The North West Territories Act of 1875 (of which the 1901 Ordinance was a restricted version) made explicit provisions for separate schools:

A majority of ratepayers of any district or portion of the North West Territories... may establish such schools as they may think fit, and make the necessary assessment and collection of taxes thereof; and further, that the minority of ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic may establish separate schools therein, and that, in such latter case, the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic

¹⁴ *Canadian Annual Review*, 1905, p. 255.

¹⁵ Keith A. McLEOD, "Politics, Schools and the French Language, 1881-1931," in *Politics in Saskatchewan*, edited by Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Ltd., 1968), p. 24.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.24.

separate schools shall be liable only to assessments of such rates as they may impose upon themselves in respect thereof.¹⁷

The separate school question was not prominent in the years immediately following Saskatchewan provincial status. However, Premier Scott considered education important enough to keep for himself the Ministry of Education portfolio.¹⁸

In 1913 a controversy developed over the allocation of company taxes to separate schools and the question of whether a member of a religious minority was compelled to pay taxes to the separate school by members of the religious minority which organized them.¹⁹ Scott favoured an equitable division of company taxes and compulsory support of separate schools by members of the religious minority which organized them.²⁰ Scott entered a heated dispute over these issues with the Reverend Murdoch A. Mackinnon, the minister of the Knox Presbyterian Church, Regina, Scott's own church. Mackinnon accused Scott of depriving "the Roman Catholics of their rights of choice of school and to place a whip in the hands of the priest which he may be inclined to use."²¹ Mackinnon went on to accuse Scott of having "allowed the church of Rome to use the legislature of this province for its own designs."²²

Criticism against Scott mounted. Mackinnon was joined in his attack on Scott by the Orange Order (which promised to support the political party which abolished separate schools), the Saskatchewan Schools Trustees Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, and several protestant ministers of various

¹⁷ *Northwest Territories Act*, 1875, Sec. 11; *Saskatchewan Act*, 1905, Sec. 17;

Jerome F. WEBER, O.S.B., "Report on Separate Schools," Muenster, Saskatchewan (Unpublished mimeograph, 1952), p. 15.

¹⁸ C.B. Sissoxs, *Church and State in Canadian Education* (Toronto Ryerson Press, 1958), p. 275.

¹⁹ Keith A. McLEOD, "Politics, School and the French Language, 1881-1931," p. 133.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

²¹ Letter from Mackinnon to Scott, December 30, 1912, Scott Papers, pp. 35271-35273, Public Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

²² Letter from Mackinnon to Scott, January 6, 1915, Scott Papers, pp. 3559-3568, Public Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

denominations. In January 1916, W.B. Willoughby, the Conservative leader, declared that his party would repeal the School Act if elected.²³ Raymond Huel in his thesis “L’Association Catholique Franco-Canadienne de la Saskatchewan: A Response to Cultural Assimilation 1912-1934,” points out that by 1916 a “significant change had taken place in the separate school controversy. What had begun three years earlier as an objection against legislation affecting the financial status of separate schools had, by 1914 shifted to an attack on the separate school system per se and by late 1915, transformed itself into an assault against the teaching of languages other than English.”²⁴

The Scott-Mackinnon debate went on in speeches, the press and sermons, and this dispute began to subside only when Scott retired due to ill health in 1916.

The First World War and the conscription crisis incensed many English-speaking Canadians against the “foreigners” and French Canadians. The new Liberal premier, W.M. Martin, came under pressure from the Orange Order, the Sons of England, and other organizations to pass “English only” laws for Saskatchewan schools. The Rev. Murdoch Mackinnon asked the Great War Veterans, the Sons of England, Scotland and Ireland, and enlightened citizens in general to get busy and “speak, write and wire until French goes with German.”²⁵ Mackinnon declared that he did not want Quebec reproduced in Saskatchewan.²⁶ Premier Martin had done some investigating and he found that in Saskatchewan seventy-seven schools taught French, seventy-one German, and thirty-seven Ukrainian, out of three thousand school districts.²⁷ However, Premier Martin under increasing pressure, in December 1918, introduced a language amendment to the School Act. English became the only language of instruction other than the use of French in grade one, but beyond the first year, a school board could provide

²³ *Regina Leader*, January 20, 1916, p. 3.

²⁴ Raymond J. HUEL, “L’Association Catholique Franco-Canadienne de la Saskatchewan: A Response to Cultural Assimilation 1912-1934,” (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1969), p. 95.

²⁵ *Saskatoon Daily Post*, December 12, 1918, p. 1.

²⁶ McLEOD, “Politics, School and the French Language, 1881-1931,” p. 140.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

for the teaching of one hour of French reading, grammar and composition.²⁸

The French Canadian Trustees Association was unhappy with this legislation; however, there was nothing they could do. The English speaking organizations were not happy either. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers still demanded English only, and the Orange Order complained of the continued provision for French. The Saskatchewan Schools Trustees Association in 1919 declared that “the language privilege granted to the French in our midst is prejudicial to the best interest of our commonwealth.”²⁹ In 1920, the Trustees Association asked the government to “forbid the display of religious emblems in any school except during the period provided for religious instruction,” and went on to ask for “the abolition of all separate schools in the province.”³⁰

Throughout the early 1920s the Orange Order and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association kept the school question alive. At their conventions they passed resolutions calling for the elimination of the French language and separate schools. It was into this not quite dormant situation that the Ku Klux Klan professional organizers came during early 1927.

With the appearance of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan hostility against Roman Catholics again began to increase rapidly. There was a fear in Saskatchewan that the East Europeans which had come to the province would assimilate into the Catholic community and then the Catholics would take over and impose French as the spoken language. The issues of crucifixes on public schools' walls, nuns teaching in public schools, and the teaching of French came to the fore. Although Saskatchewan was seventy-five percent Protestant, there were some areas that were predominantly Catholic. Therefore, in these areas the public schools were governed by a predominantly Catholic Board of Trustees. Some school trustees in these areas permitted crucifixes on school walls and hired nuns to teach.³¹ The Catholic school was therefore the public school. According to Saskatchewan school law, the minority Protestants had the right to organize their own separate school. However, this was not always feasible where there were only a few Protestant

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²⁹ *Canadian Annual Review*, 1919, p. 553.

³⁰ *Canadian Annual Review*, 1920, p. 780.

³¹ Jeannine LOCKE, “When the Ku Klux Klan Rode in Saskatchewan,” *Canadian Weekly*, June 19-25, 1965, p. 2.

families. Consequently, the few Protestant children who attended these schools were taught by nuns. Stories circulated that in public schools the crucifix had replaced the Union Jack, and that little Protestant children were punished by the nuns by being forced to kneel for hours in front of the crucifix.³² At issue was not the Roman Catholic separate schools, but the few Catholic public schools in the province. The Ku Klux Klan, the Orange Order, and other radical Protestant organizations exaggerated this situation until it became a major issue:

Would you like to have a black-skirted 'she-cat' of a Nun teach your children in a public school that you are a heretic and that you and your wife are living in sin and your family are bastards, then when chastizing your child to make it kiss the forbidden image, the Crucifix? ...Better wake up before it is too late and we have a revolution, for as sure as you are alive, blood will be spilled if the protestant people don't band together.³³

The Reverend S.P. Rondeau, a United Church minister at Woodrow, Saskatchewan, and a convert from Roman Catholicism, was a fanatic on the crucifix issue. On February 28, 1928 at a Regina meeting where he shared the platform with Dr. Hawkins, Reverend Rondeau said:

You go to Gravelbourg and the Sisters go to the public school to teach... They wear their religious emblems. They have crucifixes on their person. The Mother Superior of the public schools of Gravelbourg and Willow Bunch are the principals of the public schools and high schools. That is happening all through this country and we say that the time has come when the intelligent citizens of Saskatchewan must see to it that these matters are redressed.³⁴

³² "Klan Problems In Canada," *The Kourier Magazine*, Atlanta, Georgia, May, 1929, p. 18.

³³ From an Orange Order newsletter, see Patrick KYBA, "Ballots and Burning Crosses – The Election of 1929," p. 109.

³⁴ "The Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," *Queens Quarterly*, Vol. 35, Autumn, 1928, p.599.

Klan organizer J.J. Maloney liked to shock his audiences with an experience he claimed to have happened at Trampling Lake, Saskatchewan. At the door of the Trampling Lake public school Maloney asked:

Question: "Does Miss Brown teach here?"

Answer: "No, there are only Sisters at this school."

Question: "Well, is this not a public school?"

Answer: "Yes."

Question: "Are there any Protestants here?"

Answer: "No, they are at the separate school across the way."

Question: "Where? ... I can't see any school there."

Answer: "In the cellar of the Roman Catholic Church."³⁵

The Orange Order's newspaper *The Sentinel* published during 1927-1928 a series of articles on the "school question." "School Troubles in Saskatchewan" read the title of an exposé of the Gravelbourg school situation on April 19. Other articles included "Romanizing the Public Schools," "Education in Saskatchewan in the Hands of the Bishops," "Public School Abuses in Saskatchewan Cited," and "Nuns are Public School Principles [*sic*] Because Law Does Not Define 'Public School'."³⁶

One result of the agitation during 1928 was the Gouverneur School District court case. A group of Protestant parents removed their children, fifteen in all, from the Gouverneur public school which was located in a predominantly French Canadian area in south-western Saskatchewan.³⁷ The Protestant parents claimed that the Union Jack was replaced by a crucifix at the front of the school, and that their children were being taught the catechism as well as an hour of French every day, without a resolution permitting this from the school board as required in the Saskatchewan School Act of 1918.³⁸ The parents claimed that the children were taught to cross themselves, and

³⁵ J.J. MALONEY, *Darkness, Dawn and Daybreak* (Vancouver: Protestant Publication, 1935), p. 24.

³⁶ William CALDERWOOD, "Religious Reactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, Autumn, 1973, p. 107.

³⁷ Irene H. McEWAN, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

³⁸ C.B. Sissons, *Church and State in Canadian Education*, p. 293.

kneel before the crucifix. Complaints to the Minister of Education received no action and therefore, the parents withdrew their children from the school.³⁹

The Ku Klux Klan engaged James Bryant, K.C., a former president of the Saskatchewan Schools Trustees Association, president of the Conservative Association of Regina and an excellent public speaker and debater, to defend the Protestant parents. Bryant had the action of truancy brought against the parents dismissed on the grounds that the school ceased to be a public school when the School Act regulations were not abided by.⁴⁰ The Klan and its supporters regarded the Gouverneur verdict as a great victory for their cause.

The Conservative party provincial convention was held in Saskatoon on March 15 and 16, 1928. A total of three hundred and four delegates were present, averaging five for each of the sixty-three constituencies in the province. At this convention the Conservatives and the Ku Klux Klan had managed to find each other. Dr. Rosborough, the Imperial Wizard, Mr. Ellis of Regina, the Klan Kligrapp (secretary) and Dr. Hawkins were all present at the convention. Dr. Hawkins was an observer, the other two were delegates, and Klan literature was available at the door and inside the convention hall.⁴¹

The convention elected the M.L.A. for Saskatoon, Dr. J.T.M. Anderson, leader of the provincial party. The personal views on the school question of Dr. Anderson, an Irish Canadian and Orangeman, were well known. In his book *The Education of the New Canadian*, Dr. Anderson argued that the public or common school was vital. Anderson wrote that the public school "...is the great melting pot into which must be placed these diverse racial groups, and from which will emerge the pure gold of Canadian citizenship... for manifest reasons the elementary parochial schools, with their disintegrating influences and elements of separatism, must also prove to be a detrimental factor in the achievement of this great end."⁴²

There were only three Catholic delegates at the convention, but all three

³⁹ Irene H. McEWAN, *op. cit.*, p.23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

⁴¹ William CALDERWOOD, "The Decline of the Progressive Party in Saskatchewan, 1925-1930," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XXI, No. 3, Autumn, 1968, p.94; *Saskatoon Phoenix*, June 2, 1928, p. 5; *The Western Producer*, March 22, 1928, p. 1.

⁴² J.T.M. ANDERSON, *The Education of the New Canadians* (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.. 1918, p. 238.

were prominent party workers who were well known among the delegates. One of the three, J.J. Leddy of Saskatoon, was nominated as member of the Advisory Council, but he was subsequently asked by the chairman of the nominating committee to withdraw his name on the grounds that it was "inexpedient that any Catholic should hold office in this organization."⁴³ Leddy refused to withdraw his name, and in the election was easily defeated. Another Catholic, A.G. Mackinnon, was nominated for an executive position on a committee, but his name disappeared from the list of nominees and was replaced by another.⁴⁴ The result of this was that of the fifty-seven executive or committee positions filled at the convention there were no Catholics holding office. James Bryant K.C., president of the Conservative Association of Regina, remarked that the Conservative party should not worry about alienating the Roman Catholics because it did not get their votes in any event.⁴⁵

At the convention a resolution was passed inviting "cooperation of all parties, groups and individuals opposed to the present administration." The Saskatchewan Progressive party accepted this invitation, and a telegram was received from Dr. E.L. Tran, the Saskatchewan Progressive party leader, which "accepted the principles of cooperation."⁴⁶

But what was the role of the Ku Klux Klan in this political cooperation? The Klan certainly opposed the Liberal government, and it would appear that it would be inexpedient for any Catholic to hold office in a Conservative party cooperating with the Ku Klux Klan. Irene H. McEwan in her article "Religious and Racial Influences on a Senate Appointment, 1931" states that "It was at the Conservative party convention in Saskatoon in March, 1928, that, in the minds of many, the fortunes of the Klan and the Conservative party became intertwined."⁴⁷ Although there is no conclusive evidence of a Conservative-Klan link, the Conservative party never disassociated itself from the Klan.⁴⁸ The Conservative party may not have agreed with the Klan's

⁴³ Irene H. *McEwan, op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁶ *The Western Producer*, March 22, 1928, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Irene H. McEWAN, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁴⁸ Although Klan membership crossed party lines, the Conservatives had in the provincial legislature and the federal parliament members who were also

methods or principles; however, they used the prevailing situation in Saskatchewan brought about by Klan activity superbly.

Premier Gardiner, the Liberal premier, was convinced of a Conservative-Klan link. He investigated the background of the Klan leaders, and then on the advice of his friend, Prime Minister Mackenzie King, in January 1928 he launched an attack on the Klan in and outside the legislature.

In the autumn of 1928, Premier Gardiner decided to test the strength of the Conservative party and the Ku Klux Klan. He called a by-election at Arm River, a constituency just north of Regina. For Dr. Anderson and the Conservative party, the Arm River by-election was a test to see if they could capitalize on the conditions of fear and suspicion created by the Klan.

The candidates for the by-election were Thomas Wough (Liberal) and Stewart Adrian (Conservative). But the election was really a personal battle between Premier Gardiner and Dr. Anderson. Throughout October they spoke nightly on the "school issue" and the "immigration issue." Dr. Anderson told one audience that when he was a school inspector, a boy in grade five "didn't know of the Union Jack or who the King and Queen of England were. He might as well have been educated in a foreign land."⁴⁹ To this Premier Gardiner, who had now taken over the Ministry of Education portfolio, could only answer with facts and figures. Time after time Premier Gardiner stated that in Saskatchewan "we have 820,000 people and 624,000 were born within the British Empire." As for Catholic domination of the school system Gardiner pointed to the facts. In the province's 4,776 school districts, there were only 31 separate schools, and eight of them were Protestant; of the province's 7,779 school teachers, only 146 were nuns. He suggested that, if any group had a just complaint, it was the twenty percent which was

Klansmen. Members of the provincial legislature were Nat Given (Delisle) who was also a leading Orangeman; J.A. Mekley (Moose Jaw); William Smith (Swift Current); W.W. Millar (Biggar); and probably D.J. Sikes. Klansmen from Saskatchewan who were member of the federal parliament were Dr. D.W.D. Cowan and F.W. Turnbull. William CALDERWOOD, "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," (Unpublished M.A. thesis University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1968), pp. 215-217; Irene H. McEWAN, *op. cit.*, p. 22; House of Common Debates, Vol. 5, Session 1932-33, p. 5466.

⁴⁹ Jeannine LOCKE, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Catholic.⁵⁰

After the Arm River ballots were counted, the Liberals had won by fifty-nine votes. The result was not disastrous for the Liberals. Arm River was a predominantly Anglo-Saxon area. There was a large Orange Order vote, and also a number of Klan Klaverns in the district.

Seven months later Premier Gardiner called a general election for June 6, 1929. The main issues were the same as the Arm River by-election. During the election campaign Klan lecturers toured the province calling Premier Gardiner "Pope Gardiner the First," and telling audiences that 100,000 French speaking immigrants were going to be brought to Saskatchewan, and even the Pope was preparing to move to Canada.⁵¹ Premier Gardiner found himself defending his own religious beliefs. Before beginning an address he would announce: "I am not here to speak on behalf of any particular religion or race or creed... I happen to be of the Protestant faith... I make this explanation in order to answer once and for all the statements being made with regard to my religious beliefs and activities."⁵²

During the election campaign the Ku Klux Klan's school policy was clear. The Klan wanted that:

1. Separate schools should be abolished
2. French no longer be taught
3. All the schools be completely non-sectarian.⁵³

The Conservative party's policy, however, was not so clear. Three days before the election Anderson described as "nonsense" a charge that the Conservatives would try to abolish separate schools. At issue, he said, were the public schools, not the separate schools.⁵⁴ However, six days before the election F.W. Turnbull, a leading Conservative, called for secular education and stated that the provincial schools would be organized so that children "of

⁵⁰ *Saskatoon Phoenix*, June 1, 1928.

⁵¹ Jeannine Locke, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵³ Peter RUSSEL, "The Cooperative Government in Saskatchewan 1929-1934," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1970), p. 11.

⁵⁴ *Regina Daily Star*, May 23, 1929, p. 1.

whatever race or religion they may profess, shall be at liberty to attend the public schools of the province and get their common school education without having their religion interfered with.”⁵⁵ The Conservative party program as published on May 30, 1929 placed heavy emphasis on education

Education : ...The revision of textbooks with a view to seeing that all textbooks with a denominational bias and with unpatriotic sentiments are kept out of the public schools of Saskatchewan.

That the School Act be amended to prohibit the use of any religious emblems in the public schools of the province, where there are pupils or ratepayers of mixed denominations and to prohibit the holding of the public schools in buildings used for religious purpose except temporarily.⁵⁶

From statements made by Dr. Anderson and the Conservative party’s official platform it would appear that the Conservatives were concerned only with the public schools. However, by looking at statements by such Conservatives as F.W. Turnbull, it would seem that an audience would believe the Conservative party was talking about all the schools in Saskatchewan in a common school education.

After the election the party standings were as follows: Liberals 26, Conservatives 24, Progressives 5, and Independents 6. After Premier Gardiner found that he could not gain any Progressive or Independent support, and after he was defeated in the legislature, his Liberal government resigned.⁵⁷ Twenty-four years of Liberal rule in Saskatchewan was at an end.

There were several issues that brought the Liberal government down. There had been allegations of corruption levelled at the Liberal government

⁵⁵ Andrew Johnson MILNOR, *Agrarian Protest in Saskatchewan 1929--48; A Study in Ethnic Politics*, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1962), p.53.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Jeannine LOCKE, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

in using the civil service for political ends, and there was the resources question. But the main issues that brought down the Gardiner government were the school and immigration issues. In his book *Rome in Canada* J.J. Maloney sums up the election and its results thus:

But getting back to the main issue of 1929—it was the school question. The Conservatives being advised to concentrate on forty ridings and let twenty-three go, won thirty-four and remained in power for five years.⁵⁸

The new premier immediately asked the Attorney General's department for a legal interpretation as to whether religion could be taught in languages other than English. The reply was that because religious instruction was given during school hours it could be taught only in English. Dr. Anderson, who retained for himself the Ministry of Education portfolio, determined that there was no authority in the School Act for a person other than a regular teacher to give religious instruction in school during the time provided by the school law.⁵⁹ In September 1929, Anderson suppressed the exchange of all teaching certificates with Quebec on the grounds that they were inferior to those of Saskatchewan.⁶⁰

In February 1930, Anderson introduced into the legislature seven Bills relating to the school question. Four of the Bills were not contested, but a section specifying that school trustees must be able to read and write English and that school meetings must be conducted in English ran into so much opposition that it was amended to permit exceptions upon the certificate of a school inspector for the district concerned. The most contentious of the Bills, however, was that dealing with religious emblems and religious garb in the public schools:

⁵⁸ J.J. MALONEY, *Rome in Canada*, p. 153.

⁵⁹ Keith A. McLEOD, "Politics, Schools and the French Language, 1881-1931," p. 145.

⁶⁰ *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 28, 1929, p. 3.

No emblem of any religious faith, denomination, order, sect society or association shall be displayed in or on any public school while wearing the garb of any religious faith, denomination, order, sect, society; or association.⁶¹

The Saskatchewan French Catholic Trustees appealed to R.B. Bennett, the Conservative Prime Minister of Canada, to intercede on their behalf with Dr. Anderson. Bennett, who was under pressure from Catholics within the Conservative party, urged Anderson to be less rigid on the grounds that Anderson's actions in Saskatchewan were causing resentment in Quebec. Dr. Anderson, however, was adamant that these Bills would be passed and advised Prime Minister Bennett that he was in a much better position to judge the effects of the school legislation.⁶²

In early 1931, Anderson introduced a further amendment to the School Act which abolished the use of French in the first year of school as was allowed by the School Act.⁶³

By 1932, the controversy surrounding the school issue diminished. Perhaps enough had been done to satisfy the opponents of the Catholic schools, but more probably the beginning of the depression made people worry less about their neighbour's religion and more about the matter of economic survival. However, Anderson's philosophy, plus his amendments to the School Act, have had a lasting effect on the Saskatchewan school system.

The Klan soon faded from the Saskatchewan scene. In September, J.J. Maloney shifted his activities to Edmonton which he soon discovered to be the "Rome of the West" and there he made "a clarion call to sleeping Protestantism"⁶⁴ In the 1934 provincial election in Saskatchewan the Conservative party was defeated, the Liberals getting fifty seats.

⁶¹ *Canadian Annual Review*, 1929-30, p.482.

⁶² Irene H McEWAN, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁶⁴ J.J. MALONEY, *Rome in Canada*, p. 157.