

“Forming Civilization at Red River: Nineteenth-Century Missionary Education of Métis and Aboriginal Children.”

Jonathan Anuik
10 Pinder Crescent
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada
S7J 2K8

Presentation Event: Colloquium 2004, Kenora, May 26th – 29th, 2004

In the early 1820s, a number of Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries¹ developed school systems in Red River that transmitted European civilization to the settlement in Hudson’s Bay Company [HBC] controlled Rupert’s Land.² The settlement was rife with tension between the indigenous First Nations and Métis³ peoples and the new Canadian, British, and small number of continental European, colonizers. The development of denominational schooling, designed by local missionaries to educate a next generation of civilized children, exposed the cultural differences. The missionaries believed Christianity to be the main pillar of European civilization, and also held that agriculture was essential to a civilized economy. The missionaries believed that children would be most receptive to their teachings of British civilization.⁴ Consequently, the missionaries concentrated their efforts on establishing denominational school systems and used then current pedagogical theories to form the civilized child. The different denominations hoped that this educated child would then grow up to civilize the settlement. Overall, the formed child was, to the missionaries, Christian, educated, and agrarian, but not all parents saw the need for this type of education.⁵ Consequently, all parents may not have agreed

¹ The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was an important missionary group in the Northwest. Centralized in the Norway House district of Rupert’s Land, the Methodists embarked on a program of civilization similar to the Anglicans and the Catholics. However, no Methodists ever attempted to civilize Red River and due to their distance from the settlement, Methodist missions will not be examined in the investigation.

² In the study of pre-Confederation missionary education, the research focused on the perspective of the Anglican, Catholic, and Presbyterian missionary groups and primarily on the question of what defined civilized children. The various primary records of the three missionary groups have been consulted in order to answer the question of what the missionary groups thought the civilized child was. The First Nations and Métis perspective has been omitted, primarily because the study is of missionary education, and missionary and European, perceptions of civilized children.

³ Many of the students in the classrooms of Red River were of Métis or mixed-blood origin. However, in the twentieth century, historians classified the Métis and the mixed-bloods under one term, Métis. Therefore, the term Métis encompasses both Anglophone, being children of British fathers and Aboriginal mothers, Francophone, or children of Canadian fathers and Aboriginal mothers, and the offspring of at least one parent of mixed ancestry. For the purposes of the paper, the term Métis will be used to define all children of mixed ancestry, and words like Anglophone, Francophone, and HBC will be assigned as needed.

⁴ The missionaries wanted the children they educated to grow into Christian, sedentary, and middle class adults who emulated European society. The personnel of the Church Missionary Society [CMS], associated with the Anglican Church of England, had a plan for transplanting the middle-class European society to Red River children. The CMS used Christianity to enforce conformity and community and industrial education to rear a next generation of farmers who would be able to live comfortably while worshipping.

⁵ By civilization, the missionaries meant nineteenth-century British culture with its accumulated scientific and technical knowledge; it’s capitalist, industrializing and urbanizing economy, its literature and Christian religion.

and this fundamental lack of consensus created two formidable challenges to education, especially when the foundations were being laid, in the period of 1820 to the late 1850s.

The missionary ideal of civilization for Métis children was like a structured becoming. They perceived that undisciplined, disobedient, and uneducated children should be formed into Christian, literate, industrious, sedentary, polite, and obedient adults. To the missionaries, this formative process would consist of instruction in scriptural and doctrinal knowledge as well as basic academic and industrial subjects.⁶ In order to mold children into the perceived ideal, the pedagogues would implant a more conditioned personality.⁷ Ideally, as civilized adults, the children would pursue activities such as agriculture and would also spread the faith of God both to their children and to the non-Christian bands in which they were born.

To ensure that students would learn virtue and good moral conduct, the teachers of civilization would have to install discipline early, or all instruction that children had received would run the risk of being lost. According to the missionaries, children were inherently undisciplined, especially orphan Métis children who wandered around the fur trade posts and Red River without purpose,⁸ or Métis children who travelled with the buffalo hunt. For the missionary societies, for children to be civilized, they would have to learn order and virtue early so that ideas like discipline would not be foreign to them.⁹ Part of discipline was good moral conduct. Not only were children to be obedient to their teachers, but also willing to endure sacrifice and privation to advance the Kingdom of God.¹⁰ Throughout the years of Red River, good moral conduct was an important goal of civilization, because good moral conduct enforced discipline and conformity to the rural British Christian and agricultural landscape.

⁶ Berry Mayall, *Children, health, and the social order* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996) 5, 19-21, 54. Berry Mayall applied the theory of the “structured becoming” of childhood to his study of twentieth-century childhood in the United Kingdom. According to Mayall, the “structured becoming” would be facilitated through institutions like education and would occur through a series of stages marked by adults (i.e., infancy, childhood, and adolescence).

⁷ Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1909) 113. Theorist Ellen Key termed the replacement of personality as the crime of education, in that children would be deprived of their real self for the sake of maintaining order. Theorists who followed Key modified her perspective. Priscilla Robertson thought that educational institutions, such as the programs of civilization initiated by the missionary societies, changed rather than replaced personalities. She thought of nineteenth-century children as individuals with distinct needs. She further argued that pedagogues in schools, for instance, ensured children’s needs were met while they re-enforced conformity. In the case of Red River, children would be brought to Christianity and would be provided with a new means of subsistence, like agriculture. Priscilla Robertson, “Home as a Nest: Middle Class Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Europe,” *The History of Childhood*, ed. Lloyd deMause (New York: the Psychohistory Press, 1974) 407-8, 421.

⁸ NAC, CMS, *Jones’ Journal*, 22 Aug. 1822, A-77, 36-37 and *Ibid.*, *Clockhouse in Fairham*, 3 Dec. 1823, A-77, 64.

⁹ Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* trans. Hildegarde Hannum and Hunter Hannum (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1983) 11-13, 27, 45-46. Alice Miller referred to childhood theorist J. Sülzer, who, in 1748, wrote that willfulness in children would have to be eliminated early so that the educational process could take over.

¹⁰ “The Children’s Work,” *The Home and foreign record of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces*, Nov., 1868: 281, fiche 1, CIHM no. 04281-016192 ICMH no.

In order to Christianize and educate children, teachers were to provide them with religious instruction, and to ensure that they understood religious teaching; they would also instruct children in basic academic skills, such as reading and writing. These two objectives were intertwined. The teachers would use the Bible to facilitate the development of reading and writing. Once a civilized child was Christianized, disciplined, and literate, teaching topics such as agriculture would be simple. While teaching students to be agriculturalists, instructors would also re-enforce the value of attendance and obedience. Only by attendance and obedience would each child be educated to fulfill a role in the civilized society, as farmers, clergy, teachers, HBC officers or servants, or as wives to settlers, HBC officers, or servants.

According to the missionaries, civilized male and female children would have different roles. Civilized male children would learn agriculture, husbandry, carpentry, and weaving, or would receive an academic education. Both industrial and agricultural instruction would allow these adult men to financially support their families. Civilized male children would also spread the word of God and the habits of industry to their brethren back in their tribe. Civilized female children would become domestics, learning trades such as spinning, knitting, sewing, milking, and making butter. In the home, civilized women would also be the providers of comfort for their families,¹¹ the transmitters of morality and discipline to their children, and the upholders of a good moral standard.¹² Therefore, women would teach discipline and obedience to children, so that their children would be willing participants in the Christianization and education provided at the schools.

The majority of the male and female children who would be Christianized, educated, and agrarian was Métis, and both genders were being reared for the mission of transmitting civilization to future generations. The missionaries thought of Métis children as the bridge between the Aboriginal or “heathen” orders and the European or civilized society. In sum, the missionaries hoped that their civilized Métis children would grow into adults and parents who would demonstrate to their Aboriginal communities and children the principles of a sedentary existence on a British cultural landscape.¹³

In order to rear the first generation of Christianized, educated, and agrarian Métis children, the missionaries had to convince three different types of parents of the value of education. The first group was the elite parents, or those adults who were retired HBC and North West Company [NWC] officers, and in some cases, retired servants. These individuals made up the new middle class evolving in the settlement in the 1820s. The new middle class parents supported the missionaries in their plans for civilization, as they desired that their Métis children be educated as Europeans, and distanced from their First Nations and Métis cultural ties, and

¹¹ NAC, CMS, *Cockran to Woodroffe*, 3 Aug. 1831, A-77, 438.

¹² Mayall 5, 19-21, 54. For Mayall, the most important influences came from women, because women were the primary individuals responsible for the rearing of pre-school-age children. Therefore, the missionaries saw women as the individuals who would install discipline and obedience in pre-school-age children.

¹³ Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and Métis* (Edmonton: the University of Alberta Press, 1996) 104.

from economic activities like the hunt. These parents also had the financial means to ensure that their children received at least an elementary education. The second group consisted of settler parents who came from Europe to engage in agricultural pursuits. These parents appreciated the opportunities that education brought their children, but due to their economic circumstances, could not send their children to school on a regular basis and could not afford the education that the missionaries provided. They did want their children to become farmers, however, and owned land on which their children could learn industry. Finally, there were the hunter, gatherer, and trader parents. This group of adults looked to these activities rather than to agriculture for subsistence and they relied on their children's help for survival. When they were not hunting, they squatted in shacks and engaged in subsistence agriculture. They were often illiterate and in some cases, saw no benefit from the education that the missionaries proposed for their children. Instead, they taught their children the practical skills they needed to survive on the plains. Consequently, they were the individuals who co-operated the least with the missionaries and their children were the least likely to attend school. The missionaries met all three groups of parents at Red River, and the attitudes about child-rearing and education from each group both advanced and stalled missionary plans to civilize children.

The missionary societies planned to transmit their idea of the civilized child through a curriculum that involved obedience, discipline, religion, reading, rote memorization, writing, arithmetic, and industry. While some First Nations and Métis welcomed the chance for their children to be taught subjects like reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as industrial pursuits like agriculture, the two groups did not want this form of education to change the personality and culture of their children. The parents wanted to help themselves and their children adapt but they did not want to assimilate into a nineteenth-century Victorian British¹⁴ cultural terrain.¹⁵ Consequently, while parents welcomed the chance for education and were reasonably co-operative, the implementation of the denominational system of education and the plan for forming civilized children met two challenges.

As a community remote from trade, Red River was suitable for the evolution of a system of denominational education that re-enforced the nineteenth century European model of the civilized child on what the missionaries perceived as a primitive Métis society. The Protestants, the Catholics, and later the Presbyterians developed this denominational system, and key individuals in each group were responsible for its formation. The education contained religious, academic, and industrial components and its implementation resulted in divisions based on race, class, and gender.

¹⁴ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) 135. Nineteenth-century Methodist educational reformer Egerton Ryerson thought of education as the chance to provide basic English language instruction and religious instruction to a next generation of Aboriginal farmers and mechanics.

¹⁵ Miller 129-30, 135, 142. Studying the Ojibwa of nineteenth-century Canada West, Miller concluded that the Ojibwa recognized education as necessary for their continued prosperity at a time when the area was becoming more and more inhabited by literate Europeans.

The Reverend John West laid the foundation for the Church Missionary Society's [CMS] program of civilization.¹⁶ West came to Rupert's Land from his native land of Britain after the HBC appointed him chaplain and the CMS appointed him as a missionary. He arrived at Red River in October, 1820. West's philosophy of educating First Nations and Métis children focused on removing them from the fur trade, the industry that in his view had negatively changed their culture. West planned to remove First Nations and Métis children from York Factory to Red River, where they would "be educated in white man's knowledge and religion."¹⁷ The First Nations and the Métis seemed to like what West proposed as he noted that "the Indians were willing to part with their children for the purpose of their being instructed."¹⁸

To better carry out his plans for civilization, West would soon receive a helper. Reverend David Jones arrived at Red River in January, 1822. Jones was ordained deacon in December, 1822 and became a priest in April, 1823. He assumed West's position as HBC chaplain in 1823 after serving as West's assistant for one year. Upon assuming West's position, he commenced a large-scale project of schoolroom erection, but his best accomplishment was the establishment of the Red River Academy.

The greatest success of Jones was the Red River Academy, an institution developed to educate the children of HBC officers and to ensure that they received an elementary and high school education superior to the other children at the settlement. Its teachers had the goals of moral improvement, religious instruction, and general education for the sons and daughters of settlers of the fur trade. Basically, the Academy was the first high school in Red River. In an attempt to discourage individuals who were socially unqualified from attending, Jones charged £30 per year per student. Jones also hired a schoolmistress to instruct all children in the ornamental branches of education, such as music and drawing. Overall, the school was Jones' response to the fear of fur trade officers that their sons and daughters would associate with their Aboriginal ties. Former traders hoped that their children, if distanced from their First Nations and Métis ties at a young age, would forget their First Nations or Métis ancestry. For Jones, the Academy was the institution to prevent cultural contact.

Jones was a motivator for civilization and found a teacher of religion and industry in his successor, William Cockran. Cockran arrived at Red River in 1825 and was initially a co-worker of Jones'. Cockran also helped Jones to run the Academy, and after the departure of Jones in 1838, Cockran assumed complete responsibility for the Academy and for Jones' ministry. Through instruction and examination in religion, academics, and industry, as well as in discipline and obedience, Cockran formalized the curriculum for the schools that Jones had established.

¹⁶ Robert J. Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth-Century Church and Society at St. Andrew's Parish, Red River* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000) 14. The CMS was funded by a group of wealthy business leaders from Britain. The CMS was mandated with bringing British culture and civilization to Rupert's Land.

¹⁷ John West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Settlement* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966) 14.

¹⁸ NAC, CMS, *Minutes of Benjamin Harrison, Esq. on the formation of a Mission Among the Indians in the Hudson's Bay HBC's Territories*, A-77. However, West's plans for education were not well-received by the HBC, and in 1823, while in England on a brief leave of absence, the HBC decided not to renew his contract as their chaplain. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 900-902.

Cockran also employed harsh discipline to ensure the compliance of his students. This practice was in accordance with nineteenth-century pedagogy. Historians of education, like Ellen Key and Alice Miller, described the perspective of nineteenth-century pedagogues, who believed that a will and wickedness common in all young children had to be eradicated before they participated in learning. Key and Miller both agreed that physical discipline was laced with sincerity and concern for conformity in children but criticized the use of it, thinking of it as a form of “poisonous pedagogy.”¹⁹ In the 1820s and the 1830s, the missionaries perceived themselves as not only responsible for the education of children, but also the teachers of discipline and obedience, roles usually fulfilled by parents. Cockran believed in the use of corporal punishment to enforce conformity and discipline in children. He thought that children would conform to the civilized society by becoming virtuous adults who maintained and developed the community.²⁰

From 1820, the Anglicans laid the foundations for a system of education that became firmly implanted by 1850. West first removed children from what he perceived made them “uncivilized,” the fur trade. Then, Jones followed West and established the schools that West had envisioned. Finally, Cockran worked with Jones’ curriculum of obedience, discipline, religion, basic academics, and industry to train a next generation of virtuous adults. The Catholics followed a similar plan, and by the end of the 1850s, had developed education similar to the Anglicans.

Several individuals contributed to the formation of Catholic education at Red River. Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, brought the Catholic Church to the settlement. In the late 1810s, Plessis requested that Joseph-Norbert Provencher, Sévère Dumoulin, and William Edge bring religion and schools to Red River. As well, Plessis wanted the three to legitimize European marriages to Aboriginal wives through Christian instruction, erect schools, and develop catechism classes for children. Subsequently, Georges-Antoine Belcourt, in 1830, came to Red River as an assistant to Provencher. Education soon became gendered with the arrival of the two Nolin sisters, Angélique and Marguerite, who provided female children with primary education. The Grey Sisters,²¹ who arrived in the late 1850s, continued gendered education. Other important Catholics were Reverend L. Laflèche, who established year-round schooling at Saint-François-Xavier, and Provencher’s successor, Alexandre-Antonin Taché, who focused on agricultural instruction. Overall, all of these Catholic missionaries saw the Métis as the bridge that connected European and Aboriginal societies at Red River.

¹⁹ Key 108. See Miller 11-12, 14-15, 27, 31, 45-46, 59, 65-66, 70, 76.

²⁰ George van der Goes Ladd, “Father Cockran and his Children: Poisonous Pedagogy on the Banks of the Red,” *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970* ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991). Van der Goes Ladd’s analysis is limited, in that he failed to observe specific instances of corporal punishment. However, van der Goes Ladd found evidence to support the claim that the students of Cockran respected him, especially the future Reverend Garrioch.

²¹ The Grey Sisters, also known as the Sisters of Charity of Montreal or the Sisters of Charity of Nicolet, were a female religious community who assisted the Oblates of Mary Immaculate with mission work in the northwest. In 1844, Provencher was able to obtain assistance from the Grey Sisters. Among their responsibilities were the education of children and health care.

Ordained Bishop of Juliopolis and coadjutor Bishop of Quebec in 1822, Provencher made several attempts to provide Catholic education. However, his attempts at education were informal at best, and focused on training in industry. Provencher also instructed a Latin class geared toward preparing male children for the Priesthood. Provencher's initiatives were costly and moreover the Catholic ideologies for education, that involved taking their mission and their education to the Métis, conflicted with rearing a sedentary generation of Métis child industrialists and missionaries.

Individuals who arrived in the later years of Red River continued the practice of on-foot missionary work to the Métis. Laflèche established a school at Saint François-Xavier in the early 1850s for the boys. The school operated throughout the year but was suspended during the bi-annual hunts, when Laflèche left to educate and minister to adults and children who travelled with the hunt. As Bishop, Taché proposed that the reason why Anglican missions experienced success in the 1840s was because they provided food and clothing for the students they educated. Therefore, he wanted to establish a model farm similar to the Anglicans,²² in order to educate children in agriculture and different branches of industry. Finally, the Grey Sisters at Saint François-Xavier established a Convent school. They were well-received and in their first year of operation, their school had 80 students.

After 1845, the Catholics realized that the only way that students would be civilized in education was if they were removed from their parents. The Catholics had allowed the Métis to continue with their ancestral pursuits and consequently, had not attained much success with projects of Christianization and education in religion and industry. The missionaries wanted the First Nations and Métis children to interact, so that Aboriginal children could pattern their behaviour after the more civilized Métis children.²³

The best documented example of teachers using religious instruction to instill moral and practical ideas is the Presbyterian Church. The foundations for Presbyterian education began over 30 years after the arrival of the Anglicans and the Catholics. Like the Anglicans and the Catholics 30 years previous, the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church used the lessons for Sabbath Schools to compel children to attend the school,²⁴ and to re-enforce obedience.²⁵ The

²² Cockran envisioned the Anglican model farm. At the proposed school, children would learn farming by practice and the agricultural products they produced, such as grain, potatoes, and hogs, would feed them while they learned to farm. NAC, CMS, *Smithurst's Journal from Augt 1st 1842 to Nov. 8/42*, A-78. Children's labour was needed to keep the model farms or schools of agriculture operating, as CMS funding was never enough.

²³ Huel 104.

²⁴ From Jonathan Cross, *Illustrations of the Shorter Catechism, for Children and Youth*, vol. I (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1864) 27, question LVIII, "What is required in the 4th Commandment?" 26. Exposition – "Boys and girls who can play all day in the rain and through the week, cannot go to church or Sabbath-School when it is only a little cloudy. This shows how unwilling we are to do what God requires. Those who feel and act in this way have not the spirit of Christ; all that love God, try to do what he requires; then try to keep the Sabbath."

²⁵ From Cross, question LXI, 42. "What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?" 40. "Many boys and girls go to bed on Satur-day-night without blacking their shoes and putting their clothes in order, and have it all to do on Sabbath morning. All such work is forbidden in this command."

lessons encouraged morality by instructing students to, for example, “never associate with those who speak evil of others, as they will some day speak evil of you.”²⁶ According to the ministers, schoolmasters, and schoolmistresses, Presbyterian children were to endure sacrifice and privation for the advance of the Kingdom of God on Earth,²⁷ and be obedient to parents, the teachings of the Bible, and God, while attending the Sabbath School.

Overall, the Anglicans, the Catholics, and later the Presbyterians contributed significantly to the development of civilization at Red River. The mission groups provided academic and industrial instruction, directed toward rearing a generation of civilized individuals who farmed and worshiped God, and spread the example of civilization to other First Nations and Métis groups. However, two factors conspired to interfere with each missionary group’s plan for civilization.

Two major factors seriously affected denominational civilization programs. One, the parents and guardians influenced their children, and if they either did not initially support denominational education, or withdrew their children from the program, then the potential for rearing civilized children was lost. Secondly, financing the tools required for civilization; being the schoolrooms, the schoolbooks, and the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, was a continual challenge. Parents and guardians rarely had the funds available so missionary societies usually had to finance most or all of the education provided to children. Overall these two factors would always plague denominational efforts at civilizing the child.

Attendance fluctuated in the schools. In the first place, parents had the option not to send children to school, as education was not compulsory. Secondly, many children lived far away from the schools. Isolation affected attendance, especially during the winter months, when many children did not have warm enough clothing for travel. Thirdly, illness affected attendance. One of the epidemics that plagued the settlement in the early years was scarlet fever, and when such an epidemic afflicted students, attendance declined,²⁸ not only because of fatalities but because parents refused to send healthy children to school.²⁹ Fourthly, the Anglicans recruited several of their students by promising parents that their children would be fed and clothed. However, parents sometimes took advantage of the CMS’s promise, and many children attended only to receive food and clothing.³⁰ Consequently, the fluctuation in student attendance resulted in marginal student success, primarily because of the remunerative work their parents performed. Like the Anglicans and the Catholics, the Presbyterians, in their first two decades of mission work, expected parents and guardians to participate in the civilization of their children. Presbyterian ministers criticized parents who did not provide additional religious training to their children. According to the Presbyterians, good parents instilled in their children the balance of

²⁶ Cross 139.

²⁷ “The Children’s Work” 281.

²⁸ NAC, CMS, *Hunter’s Journal from May 13th to July 28th, 1845*, A-78.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *Pembrum’s Report*, A-78, 314.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, *Cowley’s Journal*, 19 Oct. 1845 and 1 Jan. 1846, A-78.

industry and benevolence. The ministers and teachers stated that no Christian instruction in the Sabbath or Day schools could replace family instruction, especially in the home and on the evening of the Sabbath.³¹ For the Presbyterians, not only was the support of parents and guardians needed, but parents and guardians were also pedagogues outside of the classroom.

Although parental attitudes toward education were a major problem with the success of civilization, financial pressures always undermined the attempts of the CMS and the Catholic Church in their plans for civilization, primarily because parents could not afford to educate their children. Schoolhouses required maintenance and stretched the budgets of missionary societies. Throughout the 1850s, missionaries and schoolmasters appealed to the CMS for increases in their grants so that they could afford to maintain their buildings, but the grants provided were never enough.³² Frustrated by the cost of educating poor children, Provencher asked the Grey Nuns to erect an English-language school that took both Catholic and non-Catholic students. Provencher hoped that he would be able to use the school fees paid by the wealthy fur traders to cover the expense of educating children who could not afford school.³³ Although Taché hoped to establish a model farming school, he thought that the plan would be impossible because of money.³⁴ Therefore, for the Catholics, keeping the schoolrooms operational while paying for the education of children proved to be a challenge. Like the Anglicans of the 1820s and the 1830s, the Presbyterians wanted to elevate the quality of the curriculum in the schools, but finances prevented them from hiring better teachers.³⁵

Although attendance and funding were significant problems for denominational education, by the 1840s and the 1850s, the problems were growing pains of a system that was, for the Anglicans and the Catholics, planted firmly. Problems such as attendance, student isolation, and epidemics represented continuous social issues in education that would take years to overcome. Each missionary group provided at least a partial education in classrooms ranging from 10 to 120 students. However, the over-arching goal of forming civilized children continued to be a challenge, regardless of how developed the curriculum was, how many textbooks were in the schoolroom, and how many schoolrooms were erected. The missionary societies failed to convince many Métis that their ancestral economic activities, and the involvement of their children in these enterprises, were antithetical to their being civilized.

For 20 to 30 years, the missionaries transmitted a concept of civilized childhood through their burgeoning system of education. However, the civilization of children had only been

³¹ "Diets of Examination," *The Home and foreign record of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces*, Apr., 1864: 69, fiche 1, CIHM no. 04281-016136 ICMH no.

³² NAC, CMS, *Cowley To Hon. Lay Secretary*, 8 Aug. 1854, A-79, 558.

³³ Martha McCarthy, *To Evangelize the Nations: Roman Catholic Missions in Manitoba 1818-1870 Papers in Manitoba History Report Number 2*, Manitoba Culture Heritage and Recreation Historic Resources, 1990 28.

³⁴ McCarthy 44.

³⁵ Henry Youle Hind, M.A., F.R.G.S., *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858* Vol. 1 (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, New York, 1969) Black in Hind 219-20.

partially accomplished by 1870, because the missionary societies could not compel children to remain away from their traditional culture. While many Métis children attended school, the missionaries believed that the effectiveness of the lessons depended on how long and how often the children stayed in missionary schools and away from their ancestral economy.

The missionaries experienced trouble transmitting their concept of childhood because the traditional Métis economy prevented the regular attendance of children at school. According to the missionaries, many students did not become civilized because their parents or guardians did not understand or did not want to understand what the missionaries wanted to accomplish.³⁶ Therefore, the missionaries wanted to completely remove students from First Nations and Métis communities and place them in an environment where missionary principles of discipline, obedience, Christianity, academics, and industry predominated over trading, hunting, and gathering. The missionaries thought that cultural confusion would be alleviated only if the removal of children from First Nations and Métis communities was mandatory and permanent.³⁷ However, the post-Confederation period proved the civilizing missionaries wrong.

³⁶ NAC, CMS, *Cockran to Secretaries*, 11 Aug. 1828, A-77, 314.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, CMS, *Cockran to Secretaries*, 11 Aug. 1828, A-77. In the 1820s, Cockran wrote to the Secretaries of the CMS stating that he was frustrated with the fluctuating numbers of students in class, and the decision of parents not to send children to school. Cockran wrote that a system of compulsion was needed for children at Red River.