

## Hugging the Meridian

grants from Great Britain, there were French enclaves in the municipality. Some of the *voyageurs* chose to remain in the west after the expiration of their service contracts. These men joined Indian bands and learned the discipline of the buffalo hunt, passing on the knowledge to their offspring the Métis. Their descendants were already hunting buffalo and living in the district near Starbuck before municipal boundaries had been decided.<sup>5</sup> The Roman Catholic Church began watering stock along the La Salle River, and in the 1880s Archbishop Taché<sup>6</sup> reserved a 160-acre lot along the river bank for a future parish. This choice of the church decided many Catholics to establish themselves on neighboring land in Township 8-2E.

Multiple land transfers and several boundary extensions caused confusion as to whether land belonged to the Dominion or the province. An entry in the 1889 council minutes indicated Amable, Louis and Modiste Gaudry, having established that the parts of Sections 19, 30 and 31 of Township 8-2E on which they were allowed to homestead was Dominion land, were entitled to a refund of money paid for the land's redemption.<sup>7</sup>

In 1889 Premier Thomas Greenway, acting also as minister of agriculture, made immigration to the province his personal responsibility. He saw to it that literature on Manitoba was distributed through the newly-opened immigration office in Toronto.<sup>8</sup>

The *Western Municipal News* went one step further in suggesting that the true nature of the area be advertised: "The bee searches for honey not beauty and magnificence; and in like manner the average man when you talk immigration to him, thinks chiefly of the financial aspects of the question. The beauty of the new town or the new country only attracts the artist. . . The average man cannot live on scenery and magnificence and unproduced wealth. The average man is a capitalist. If he has no money to invest, he has brains and time and power. So the question our towns should consider first and above all is what opportunity can we offer a man with capital to make his home in our midst."<sup>9</sup>

A few years earlier, an auditor's report carried an admonition that while Council advertised the municipality's proximity to Winnipeg and its abundance of choice land, care should be taken "in every manner possible [to] use economy — to reduce the rate of taxation. Nothing is so attractive to the settler than good surroundings and a low rate of taxation."<sup>10</sup>

The municipality's proximity to Winnipeg certainly played an important part in the area's settlement. In early years, men like Fred