

# MILLION-WORD PROBE

## Marathon Inquiry Into School Strike Sets Manitoba Record

With 56 witnesses heard to date, Manitoba's record-smashing marathon inquiry by a board of reference into the East Kildonan school strike, when it adjourned Wednesday until May 14, had occupied 30 sessions reaching a grand total of 107 hours, had received 121 exhibits and had heard more than 1,000,000 words.

When the board first started sessions, way back March 13, it was conservatively estimated the hearing would take about three days.

That was judging it by previous inquiries. After the second week, no one dared to resort to predictions, and after the seventh the participants, who faithfully turned up night after night, settled down prepared to face each other for many moons to come.

Feature of the inquiry into whether or not Miss Ida M. Cook should have been transferred from Polson to Salisbury school in March, was "volubility". Worked out on a basis on 1,000,000 words spoken by the 56 witnesses three board members and two lawyers, the average apiece is some 16,000. This does not include comments from spectators, asides by board members, or whispered instructions to counsel.

Again estimated on the same basis each witness testified for an average of nearly two hours. Miss Cook herself occupied the stand for just under 30 per cent of the total time. Some other witnesses made but the briefest of appearances.

The huge number of exhibits filed by counsel consisted mainly of statements made by teachers or Miss Cook and of memoranda. These last were filed en masse. However, also included for the attention of the three board members was a map of the municipality (schools marked in red ink) and a diary—the now "famous little black book" of the inquiry.

An attempt was also made by C. W. Brock, counsel for the East

Kildonan school board, to file one small strap which had, according to testimony, resounded occasionally off the limbs of Polson children. This, however, was not allowed in by C. K. Guild, K.C. chairman.

### 5,000 Spectators

Number of spectators attending totalled close to 5,000, and the yardage of knitting done by lady members of the audience is believed to be well over the mile. At one time, in fact, it was rumored around the halls of the juvenile court building that a city sewing circle was holding meetings during the sessions.

As to the cost of the board of reference and who is to pay for it, that remains to be seen, but in announcing points to be specially considered by counsel in summing up, Mr. Guild ominously referred to costs, how much, and to whom he might award them.

### Voice Disapproval

Strongly disapproving the "long drawn out proceedings in connection with the board of reference inquiring into the Polson school controversy," a resolution was passed unanimously at a meeting of the East Kildonan board of trade in the Community hall, Melrose avenue, Wednesday evening. The resolution also states that the board is opposed to any costs of the inquiry being levied and charged against East Kildonan ratepayers.