

CONVENTION OF U. C. M.—(Continued).

myself quite often. There is no public men in the Province of Quebec that has been more grossly abused than myself in the last fifteen years, by the politico-clerical press. My great crime to the eyes of the pious editors of the ultra-religious papers has been to suggest reforms in our public education concerning which, to their minds, the only privilege should be left to the layman, that of paying its costs, but even not before having been properly blindfolded. I have been so roughly handled under their caustic pen that very often after having read one of their editorials I found myself repeating unconsciously the classical quotation of Virgil's Aeneid: "Tantaene animis caelestibus irae" or the verse of the French poet, Boileau:

"Tant de fiel, entre-t-il dans l'ame des devots!"

Can so much gall enter the bosom of the pious! The bitterness of this war against a lone enemy has had a peculiar effect. Every time the electoral necessities had brought me to a new parish of Quebec to address a meeting I could see, the farmers starting to look at my feet, then rising their eyes slowly up to at least one foot over my head to lower them a few moments after to the proper level of my face when the most demonstrative of them would say with amazement: *y est bien p'tit, how small he is.* And I have had this very same experience the first time I met the principal of one of our largest seminary..

The number of poisoned arrows that had been thrown at me had put the people, who never had met me, under the impression that I was some kind of a giant. Closer relations had brought me back to my proper physical height and had also most probably corrected in the minds of my hearers some misapprehensions with which they had been inspired against my educational activity.

Close relations eradicate the roots of misunderstanding. Misunderstanding is generally caused by misinformations and misinformations cannot withstand the test of close relations. By close relations we have not only solved in our city the religious and the racial questions, but we have also found ways to settle the disagreement between the producing farmer and the consuming laborer. The farmer always wants to sell at the highest price, the consumer to buy at the lowest. The conflict was settled as far as our municipal activity was concerned in drafting our by-laws so that the price would be neither low nor high but fair to both parties, insuring an honest return to the producer and a decent basketful to the consumer for his hard-earned five-dollar bill.

The municipal men of the East know that there are very big and momentous problems to be solved in which there are strong conflicts of opinion between the producing West and the manufacturing East. But they think that there is no one of them that could not be solved to the satisfaction of both sections if they were approached in that spirit of good-will of which I have spoken as the great leveller of social and economic asperities. This good-will can only be brought about by having closer relations between the people of both ends of the country.

And by what more convenient bodies can they get together than the municipal councils. In most local governments are found representatives of every class, every creed, every trade and every calling of life in constant and close contact with their constituents. There is no elected assembly more representative of the electors and nobody would dare contradict that, if all the municipal men would assemble in one parliament, no electoral scheme of any description could give us a better proportion of representation. Every class would be fairly represented according to its numerical and national importance.

It has been written that the French revolution, the dawn of the world social liberty, was brought about by the municipalities and it is true. The French people in the hour when the royal troops could have dissolved any parliament sympathetic to their cause turned their eyes and not in vain towards their municipal assemblies. And the fall of the Bastille event, which the French people will commemorate Sunday next for the one hundred and twenty-ninth time, it was by their heroic municipal guards that it was accomplished.

If the French municipalities were powerful enough to overthrow the stronghold of so many centuries of tyranny why should not the united Canadian municipalities succeed in stamping out from this country the host of religious, racial and economic prejudices that are handicapping the welfare of Canada.

After the war the period of reconstruction will claim all our efforts and no one should be lost to keep on the strife we had before 1914 and that was not even silenced by the clashing of the arms of our boys from the East and the West fighting side by side for the defence of Britain, France and democracy; of those brave boys who seem to have responded to the commands of the hero of Scotland, of whom Thomas Carlyle said: "A Heroic Wallace, quartered on the scaffold, cannot hinder that his Scotland become, one day, a part of England; but he does hinder that it become, on tyrannous, unfair terms, a part of it; commands still, as with a god's voice, from his old Valhalla and Temple of the Brave, that there be a just and real union as of brother and brother, not a false and merely semblant one as of slave and master." Let us follow their example. Let us get close together to find out how we can best serve the particular interests of each of our own municipality and at the same time instill into our constituents that same spirit of loved Canadianism that will make of our country a peaceful rival of our great American ally.

Kipling has written:

East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet,

but before him it had been said that the American Republic would not last because of the conflicting interests of the producing Southern States and the manufacturing Northern ones. Duruy, in his General History of the World, writes that most of the Foreign Powers, at least their governing classes, had never believed in the stability of the American Union. Time has shown that these prophecies were preposterous. The petty claim of geographical or racial character have been stifled under the blanket of general interest and each State is today more prosperous than it would have been if the voice of the separatists had been heeded to and if each section had been left the easy prey of the manufacturing trusts or of the plantation kings.

It is the same with the Canadian provinces, but, sirs, our nation has been convulsed in its undermost strata by the spasmodic perturbation of the war and, as the dregs always try to rise to the surface of the wine when the cup has been tossed violently by an awkward hand, as the scum tries to force its way to the surface of the clear water of the lake when it is swollen by the raging storm so the reactionary elements of every class are trying to use the unsteadiness of laws, the uneasiness of spirits and the perplexity of minds caused by this great war to promote the revival of their old social or political doctrines that had been buried by an enlightened and cogent democracy.

We are now in the throes of a fearful war. Our sons, our brothers, our friends are on the other side fighting the battles of right against might. There is not one of us that has not a part of his heart over there. And we know that it is for preserving the sanctity of our homes from the desecration of the Hun that they have hastily crossed the ocean. To show that we are in union of sentiments with them we often say: Hands across the sea.

Yes, hands across the sea for the liberation of self-sacrificed Belgium; hands across the sea for the evacuation of the part of my dear old France whose soil has been profaned by the foot of the Prussian; hands across the sea for the safety of valliant Great Britain; hands across the sea for the crushing of German autocracy. And for helping the cause of the Allies by making our country more and more powerful, we, the municipal men of the East, do say to the municipal men of the West: For the elimination of religious and racial strife, for the triumph of progress over reaction, for national peace and plenty, Hands Across the Land!

The balance of the report will appear in the November issue.

PENALTIES FOR BREAKING FOOD LAWS.

"Any person violating any provision or any order or regulation of the Canada Food Board now or hereafter made in pursuance of the power invested upon it, is guilty of an offence, and shall be liable upon summary conviction before a Police Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace to a penalty not exceeding \$1,000, and not less than \$100.00; or to imprisonment not exceeding three months, or to both fine and imprisonment." By Order-in-Council P. C. (1542), of June 22nd, 1918. The enforcement of the orders and regulations of the Canada Food Board depends principally upon the patriotic co-operation of the municipal authorities.