

# The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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## THE HOUSE IN SESSION

### Now Sir John Thompson's Loss is Felt.

#### THE ATTACK ON SIR FRANK SMITH.

(Special correspondence of the Register.)

Ever since the opening of the present session there has been predominating air of excitement about the place. There was the scent of battle even in the debate on the address. Every little while some incident arises and before one knows what they are about the Government and opposition orators are flashing swords as if the real battle before the country were gone forward, instead of the preliminary tilting.

Manitoba topics lend themselves most readily to these encounters and during the session these topics have cropped up very frequently. Mr. Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright, of whom perhaps the first is the greatest master of oratory and the second the most skilful rhetorician in the House, have both made several speeches in their best vein. The Government party feel greatly the loss of Sir John Thompson. Mr. Foster, Mr. Haggart, Dr. Montague and Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper are good debaters, but they are not of the same calibre as the late leader. It used to be remarked, before Sir John Thompson came to the house, that there was no one who could answer Mr. Blake to Sir John Macdonald's satisfaction, Sir Charles Tupper being the one to whom the public looked for the discharge of that task. Sir John Thompson's elucidations of difficult problems were a delight to his friends, and of course to a corresponding extent, a chagrin to his opponents. However embarrassing or hotly a subject might appear, when Sir John Thompson left it there was always an impression of satisfaction in the country. Mr. Foster never quite shared this ability of his leader's, ready and well informed though he is.

An instance of this lack of readiness on the part of the present ministers, and which is of particular interest to Catholics, is the case of the attack on Sir Frank Smith. In giving the official relation of the cabinet reconstruction consequent upon the death of Sir John Thompson, both Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Mr. Foster omitted any reference to Sir Frank Smith. It will be remembered that at the time of Sir John's death the report was circulated and given general credence that Sir Frank had been sent for and offered the task of forming an administration, and that on his recommendation His Excellency sent for Sir Mackenzie Bowell. Nothing of this appearing in the official relation, Mr. Laurier took very strong exception to an interview said to have been given by Sir Frank Smith, in which statements were said to have been made derogating from the dignity of the Governor-General. Mr. Laurier did not on this occasion put stress upon his lack of confidence in the daily press in sympathy with the Government. He made a personal attack upon the aged Senator, which in point of bitterness was wholly extraordinary. Even in

his comments on matters of policy, the leader of the opposition has a reputation of exceeding good temper; indeed in this way he has made much of his reputation and gained many friends. That he should have indulged in a personal attack as he did on this occasion, was so far from his customary manner, that currency has been given to the supposition that the attack was more virulent than need be in order to mark the disapproval of His Excellency.

This was the point where the ministers failed to come to the relief of their absent colleague. Whatever was done at the time of the reconstruction was certainly known to those who were concerned, and it is certain that neither on this or previous or subsequent occasions has Sir Frank Smith spared himself or consulted his personal convenience when his duty to his colleagues was concerned. A striking example of this was when Sir Frank left a bed of sickness at the peril of his life to be present at the recent important conferences before the present session.

There can be no doubt that whatever irregularity may have occurred, there must have been some show of reason before a man of the Senator's acknowledged prudence would have made so grave a mistake as that charged by Mr. Laurier. Mr. Laurier may have been unjustly severe upon Sir Frank Smith, and he is properly open to censure for having made assertions of incapacity and indisposition for public service against a man who holds a position of honor in the cabinet, who gave his name and ability to restore confidence in the Department of Public Works at a time when that important department was discredited, who has been considered deserving of knight-hood, and who is looked upon as the representative of the Irish Catholics of this Province; but surely the absent minister deserved some defence from his colleagues. The indignant protests of the newspapers were hardly enough, and people of a comparative turn will think of the perhaps personally distasteful defences or explanations Sir John Thompson made on some notable occasions.

The annual encounter between Mr. Foster and Sir Richard Cartwright passed off about as usual, Mr. Foster making out a good case for the Government, and Sir Richard making one of those particularly brilliant speeches which give hints and suggestions of lines of activity to a host of writers and stump orators which last until another speech a year later starts them off on a new tack.

The now famous opinion uttered by the efficient clerk of the House has given rise to no end of trouble. For years Dr. Bourinot has been the court of last resort in matters of procedure. He is applied to by members, by chairmen of committees, by the speakers, by ministers. At last his knowledge has brought him into trouble, although all parties agree in admitting that he was acting quite innocently in giving the opinion. Mr. McCarthy is so forceful a person that whenever he makes an attack he commands attention, even if approval be denied. We are coming nearer to the discussion of the Manitoba schools question, and every skirmish, like that of Thursday, makes the interest greater and the anticipation keener.

## THE PASSING OF LEO XIII

### Eminent Members of the Hierarchy Summoned to Rome.

#### HIS POLICY ONE OF PEACE.

From the N. Y. Advertiser.

ROME, April 27.—Pope Leo XIII. is at the point of death. This has been reported before, but it is true now. Eighty five years of brilliant endeavor have crowned his career. He has made so far as a Pope may, his will and testament. He has intimated, though he has not sought, to convey absolutely his wish as to his successor. He has outlined what he thinks should be the future policy of the Church, and, coming from the man who beat Bismarck, who outwitted Gladstone and Beaconsfield, and who is regarded by those who are good judges as the most astute diplomat in Europe, it is not at all advice that the Roman Church or its leaders are likely to ignore.

Pope Leo knows that his end is near. He is older than Bismarck, for he is near to 87. He is older than Gladstone. He has seen thrones and dynasties shatter and fall. He has seen the map of Europe change a score of times. He is old and feeble and dying, though in the hollow of his thin hand he holds more than a monarch's power.

Summonses have gone forth from the Vatican for the most eminent of the Cardinals and Archbishops of the Roman Church to meet the Pope while he may yet give voice to his wishes in regard to the policy of the Church.

There may be no doubt as to his policy. It is "Peace." A soldier himself while he was a priest, he has lived long enough to see the folly of war. He has lived long enough to see Europe turned into a camp, to see Anarchy and Socialism assail all governments, and to note that when war does come Europe will be devastated.

But the grand old prelate, easily the greatest since Leo X., or the great Gregory, has set his heart's desire on maintaining the policy that has lifted the Roman Catholic Church in Europe from the position in which he found it when France was flouting it, Germany and Russia opposing it, when it was divided against itself, and when the hand of a strong man was sadly needed. How he won is an old story. How Bismarck, Crispien, young Emperor William of Germany, and even the Russian bear, had to treat with him in holding down forces that they could not control, is history. Without an army—a prisoner, practically, within the confines of his own grounds—the Pope was yet a dominant factor in European politics, and he is yet, aged and infirm though he be and at the point of death.

There is an especial significance in Pope Leo's desire to consult Cardinal Gibbons and other American prelates in these his last days. Pope Leo believes that in America lies the chief hope of the Roman Catholic Church. There are liberty, and hope, and bloodless victories to be won. There are prelates and priests, ranking from Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland,

Archbishop Corrigan and the others down, for whom the Pope has a more than ordinary regard, and it has been painful to him that these men, from time to time, disagreed. I think that the hope of the aged Pope is to heal the differences between these strong men, to institute a new missionary spirit in the United States.

The dream of the last days of the old man is a union of the Christian religion. I am told that he even hopes for an agreement, if not a combination, between the Christians and Jews, and that it was this that has led him to seek at least a defensive alliance with the Jews when they were persecuted in the East, in Turkey and Armenia.

There have been many misunderstandings in the Roman Catholic Church of late years. It is the last hope of the Pope to settle these for good and all. It is understood here that Mgr. Satolli will be here, but this is not certain. Mgr. Satolli has thoroughly entered into the Pope's ideas with regard to America. That he will practically name his own successor is certain. Now and then one sees here reports that the next Pope may be an American. This is nonsense. No American can become Pope at this time, and no American seems to aspire to the position. None, in fact, is really eligible, save Cardinal Gibbons and Mgr. Satolli, and it is the opinion of the Pope that these men are doing a great work in America greater, perhaps, than they might do as Pope. They represent, as perhaps no other man would, the policy of Leo wise, patient and firm. It does not seem that the Pope desires to recall Mgr. Satolli from America, though it may follow.

I may perhaps repeat it is sad, passing sad—the spectacle of this frail old man, while war lords and kaisers are spending millions on ships and guns for the purpose of murder, working as best he can in the end of his long life to put war away from the hands of men, to promote peace and good will and to do away with blood and iron in the Government.

What matters it what the theological opinions of this man are? The well-rounded character of his life, the nobleness of his ideals, the fidelity with which even in these his last days he is endeavoring to save his fellow-man, this transcends theology and glorifies humanity.

The world is the better for Leo XIII. having lived in it. It will be the poorer by at least one great man when he passes away from it, as he soon must. His successor will find a broad pathway made for him. Yet he will find it hard to walk in it in the manner Leo has.

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