

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 1925

OUR GREATEST POLITICAL PROBLEM

Canada is a self-governing country. In theory at least the people govern themselves. Practical experience however has led a great many Canadians to think that they have mighty little to do with government; in fact that their influence over the government of the country is practically negligible. Such people do enjoy—in every sense of the word—grouching, complaining, fault-finding, no matter who or what the government may be. To that extent, in any case, they are free; too often that exhausts their conception of political freedom and self government.

As a matter of fact the people have unlimited power. When they have a clear conception of what they really want and the will to have it their power is greater than that of any absolute monarch that ever reigned; they can have anything whatever that they really insist upon having.

We are going to have an election in the near future; just when is a matter still in the lap of the political gods. It is not too soon, however, for an intelligent self-governing people to determine the paramount political issue that will come before them for their decision. For it is not the Conservative party, nor the Liberal party, nor the Progressive party, nor for any other party or leader, to determine what this paramount issue is to be. The people, and the people alone, are in the position to decide what is the most important political issue in the coming election. If they do not realize this power and assert this right, then they are free and self-governing only in name.

It is our conviction, a conviction that admits of no doubt, that the paramount political issue before the Canadian people at the present time is how to deal with the incubus of the National Railways; an incubus that threatens to crush the financial life out of Canada; in a word, that menaces us with national bankruptcy. To some this may seem of exaggeration; but let us examine the undisputed facts of the case.

On June 25 last a special committee of the Senate appointed to enquire into and report upon the best means to relieve the country from its heavy railway expenditure presented the final report of their findings to Parliament. Unfortunately this was too close to the end of the session for consideration and discussion by either House. Now it must be borne in mind that partisan politics did not enter at all into the Committee's work. At the outset the Committee passed this resolution:

"Resolved: That the enquiry of this Committee should be confined to ascertaining from business and railway experts the best means to relieve the country of its heavy annual railway deficits, without entering into intimate details or particulars of the administration of the railways operating in Canada."

This confined the investigation to the one businesslike consideration that interests every Canadian, and effectually safeguarded it from going into matters where the narrow interests of party politics or fear of other consequences might enter.

Another wise and prudent provision that governed the investigation was that "the Committee sat in camera without shorthand reporters, as the Committee were anxious to assure the witnesses the utmost freedom in expressing their views in the frankest possible manner, so making it unnecessary for the witnesses to make qualifications or distinctions which they might wish to do if their evidence was to be published,

but which, so far as the enquiry was concerned, would be relatively unimportant."

These prominent business men and railway experts made it clear to the Committee "that the increasing obligations of the country on account of the Government Railways is a matter causing much national concern."

That it should be a matter of national concern, that it should be a matter of grave concern for each individual Canadian, is made startlingly clear by paragraph 5 of the Senate Committee's report:

"The addition to the national obligations through the Canadian National Railways has, for the last five years, averaged about \$100,000,000 annually, amounting in the aggregate, according to the Government and railway reports to the sum of \$710,948,247; or to the sum of \$595,948,247 in the last five years. There is no assurance that under the present system this expenditure will materially decrease in the near future."

These figures are absolutely appalling. They mean that every eight years or so a billion dollars will be added to the already crushing burden of national debt on account of the National Railways alone. Such staggering amounts are not easily grasped; their significance it is almost impossible to realize. One thing they make inescapably clear: we are on the high road to national bankruptcy.

The Senate enquiry was originated by the Hon. Senator David of Montreal. In his absence the Hon. Senator W. B. Ross moved the adoption of the report. It is worth while quoting a sentence or two from his remarks:

"The report is not the report of any one man; every member of the Committee had something to do with it. The attendance of the members of the Committee was wonderfully regular, every member being present, I think, at every meeting. The greatest interest was evinced in the subject that we were investigating, and I think we owe the thanks of this House to the gentlemen who appeared before the committee for the candid, straightforward evidence which they gave."

I think it would be well for the Hon. Senator who first moved in this matter to move again, and to keep at it until some solution is found for that is the greatest problem before the people of Canada today."

The Hon. Senator Beique, a Director of the Canadian Pacific Railway, gave statistics that enable us to get, from another angle, a clearer idea of the magnitude of our National Railway problem.

During the course of his remarks he said: "I look upon this question—and I think my feelings are shared by every other member of the Committee—as the greatest question that has agitated the minds of the people of this country. You have only to look at the figures mentioned in the report to see that I am not exaggerating its importance."

Then, for the purpose of comparison, Senator Beique gave the following Canadian Pacific Railway figures:

"The capitalization and bonded indebtedness of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company on 31st December, 1924, were as follows: Ordinary stock, \$260,000,000; 4% preference stock, \$100,148,587.78; or a total of \$360,148,587.78. In addition, there was 4% Consolidated debenture stock to the amount of \$264,244,882.08; 10-year 5% Collateral trust gold bonds to the amount of \$12,000,000; 20-year 4% sinking fund secured note certificates amounting to \$30,000,000; and mortgage bonds, Algoma Branch first mortgage, 5%, \$3,850,000; or a total capitalization of \$670,043,469.86, this is on the Canadian Pacific property. In addition, there are obligations of subsidiary companies which amount to \$35,015,000. Added to the \$670,043,469.86, this makes a total of \$705,058,000."

That is to say that the magnificent transportation system of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, that ranks amongst the foremost of the world, has today a total capitalization and bonded indebtedness of \$705,058,000; indeed, it is something less than this amount if we take into account rentals due; but let it stand at that. Mark the amount \$705,058,000.

And mark this: the people of Canada have incurred a debt of

\$710,948,247 for the Canadian National Railway system in the last six years!

It is only by such comparison that we can form any adequate idea of the staggering burden the Canadian National Railway system imposes on the people of Canada, already overburdened with a national debt out of all proportion to the population. According to the Honorable James A. Robb, acting Minister of Finance, our net public debt on March 31, 1924, stood at \$2,417,788,274.88.

Now the remedy proposed by the Senate Railway committee is this: "The merging of the two railway systems for the purposes of administration and operation."

"That both the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways should be placed under the management of a Board of fifteen directors, five to be named by the Canadian Pacific Railway, five to be named by the Government, and these ten to choose five proven, capable business men to complete the Board; these last five directors to hold office for ten years and to be removed only for cause."

"That a recapitalization be made of the Canadian National Railways from the point of view of earning capacity."

"That the Canadian Pacific Railway be guaranteed an agreed dividend on its stock."

"In the event of the joint management producing a surplus, a dividend at the same rate as is paid to the Canadian Pacific Railway be paid to the Government on the capitalization placed on the Government Railways. After the payment of these dividends any surplus earnings available for distribution be divided between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways, in proportion to the valuation of the two systems."

In our impatience with the action of the Senate in the matter of the Home Bank we may have said something disrespectful of the members of the second chamber. While still disagreeing altogether with the Senate's action in that case, we desire to say that we think the Senate enquiry into our railway problem and the report thereon of a high order of statesmanship. Indeed we can recall nothing done in either House that surpasses or even equals, as a matter of public service, what the Senate has here contributed toward the solution of Canada's greatest political problem.

Next week we shall give some reasons why the Senate solution should be accepted by the people of Canada.

THE CROOKED WAYS MUST BE MADE STRAIGHT

By THE OBSERVER

When Saint John the Baptist was preparing the way for the coming of Christ he said that every mountain should be brought low, and every valley filled, and the crooked ways should be made straight and the rough ways smooth. God's law appeals to us as men. Every rational man must have a motive in all that he does. Reason dictates that there should be an end in all we do. In every language correctness of living has been expressed by the word, "rectitude." Rectitude means straightness. That man is a rational man who is a straight man. A rational man is a man who goes straight to his purpose.

We differ from brutes in this, that we must have an end in all that we do. A man who acts as a rational being goes straight to his end. Therefore every right minded man is influenced by righteousness: His path is straight. The Romans loved justice and it is visible not only in their laws but in their architecture, which is all in straight lines. The Greeks loved beauty and pleasure, and it is visible not only in their literature but in their architecture which is all in curved lines.

Our Blessed Saviour came on earth to bring men back to the straight lines of rational duty, and Saint John the Baptist when acting as His precursor declared that all the crooked ways should be made straight. This Our Saviour Himself illustrated. He tells us of the wisdom of the children of this world. He compares it with the wisdom of the children of light. He says that the children of this world live for this world. They have a fixed purpose in life. They have a world view, and from their point of view they look straight ahead to their object, and everything is made to bend to that pur-

pose. Our Saviour says that the children of the next world, the children of light, have also their philosophy, that should make everything bend to the purpose they have in view. He speaks of those who are neither hot nor cold.

There are the three classes into which human society has always been divided, those who are thinking wholly or principally of what they can get out of this world; those who are thinking mainly of eternity in another world; and those who are neither very much concerned about either the one or the other.

The valleys must be filled and the mountains be brought low. From the beginning of the world, there has been a simultaneous process of building up and of levelling constantly going on. Some men have been trying to raise themselves and others to debase themselves. Some men have been trying to acquire wealth and power, and upon this foundation of wealth and power to raise themselves above their fellows. All power is at the expense of others. All wealth is at the expense of others. Therefore, from the commencement of time there has been going on this double process, this elevation of the few and degradation of the many.

When our Saviour came on earth this process was to be reversed; the rich and strong were to be brought down, and the poor were to be lifted up. Christianity is a restraint on the strong, a hope given to the weak, and a check put upon the rich. Christian civilization has tried to equalize social conditions. The Catholic Church it was that freed the slaves. She went into the pagan kingdoms of the world and made master and man kneel at her altars in equality as brothers in Christ Jesus, and that was the first time that social equality had been taught to either masters or men.

The Church is mainly for the poor, not because one soul is worth more than another, but because the poor need her most. The strong can do something for themselves. Government should be mainly for the poor; the rich need it not so much, so far as fatherly care is concerned. Government should be the arbiter between all men who have different needs and whose opportunities of satisfying those different needs are also different. The Catholic Church has always held the balance fair between all classes and conditions of men. She is the great social leveller; her doctrines do not flatter any man; she holds the terrors of hell before the eyes of the purse-proud rich man as well as before every other sinner.

Christianity is true democracy, and is the only one that is true. Christianity is the true Socialism and is the only one that is true. Modern socialism simply pulls down, says to those who have great possessions that they must give them up; that is not the reformation of the Gospel because it does not go far enough. Not only are the mountains to be brought low but the valleys are to be filled up. All men, poor and rich alike must learn their duty. The poor have no monopoly of virtue, and virtue is what Christ came to preach. Who support the vice and the wastage of the world? Assuredly, not the rich alone.

As a human social virtue, economy needs to be taught today more than it ever was needed before, and the workmen of this country have wasted enough money in the last ten years to have carried them through two years of unemployment; not all of them, but a great many. All men need to be taught self-control and self-respect. All men need to be taught that they are brothers in Christ Jesus. All men need to be taught love, not hatred. What makes the ways of the world rough and hard? Christ's messenger said that the rough ways should be made smooth. What makes them rough? Does love make them rough? No, it is hatred and lack of affection; envy and ill-will that make the ways of men rough. And those obstacles will not be removed by a mere theory, nor merely by taking money and property from some and giving it to others. Men do not love each other as Christ commanded them to do. There is too much competition. The world praises competition, and says that it is the life of men; but that is not so. There is enough and to spare for all the sons of men in this world without all this ruinous and irritating competition, if men would

use this world and its contents as God who made it and them intended them to be used. There is too much rivalry. The world says that that is just as it should be, and points to the great works that men have done under the influence of rivalry. But under the very shadow of the greatest human works you find always the disconcerting proofs of the futility of all human works. Under the shadow of the greatest buildings of the greatest cities are the shivering poor who have no roof to cover them. Hard by the magnificent parks are the miserable hovels of the poor. Grandeur and wretchedness are never far removed from one another.

All men ought to be friends; for that is Christ's wish and His command. But all men are not friends. All rich men are not friends. All poor men are not friends. And the poor and the rich are less and less friendly with every year that passes. To have men friends, they must first agree to treat each other fairly and in the light of Christian love for Christ's sake. There is no other chance for happiness in this world, but to conduct this world on the principles declared by Christ. If a man thinks only of what he can get in money and property, it does not matter whether he be poor or rich, he has rejected Christ's prescription and all the quick medicine in the world will not make him healthy. Expand that one man into a community or a nation and the truth is still true. Happiness can only be had by adopting the principles of Christ and treating each other as brothers in the Lord. All other schemes of reform are only dim echoes of that great scheme of reform enunciated by Christ the Lord.

BISHOP REFUSES TO MARRY

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT EXILES HIM FROM STATE. CATHOLIC CHURCHES CONFISCATED AND CLOSED

(This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Charles Phillips on religious conditions in Mexico. Mr. Phillips is in Mexico as the special representative of the N. C. W. C. News Service.)

By Charles Phillips
Special Correspondent, N. C. W. C. News Service

Mexico City, July 30.—Unless Right Rev. Pascual Diaz, S. J., Bishop of the Diocese of Tabasco, Mexico, breaks his vows of priestly celibacy and marries, he cannot return to his home nor resume his episcopal work. He is now in exile.

This is the situation in which the chief pastor of a flock of 180,000 Christian souls today finds himself as a result of the anti-Catholic persecutions now going on in this country. The Bishop must marry, or remain in exile. In every other way, according to the letter of the law, he is able to satisfy the requirements of the Government. But on the score of celibacy he is persona non grata. His diocese in the meantime is not only without a head, but his people are without priests, for the same persecutions which have driven Monsignor Diaz out of his home have reduced the priesthood of his diocese to three. And these three are now virtually in hiding.

COMPLETE PROSCRIPTION OF FAITH

At no time in the long history of persecution which the Church has suffered in Mexico, has there been a more systematic or complete proscription of the Faith than that now going on in the State of Tabasco. Every church in the diocese is closed, from the historical Cathedral of San Juan Bautista, in the capital, to the meanest chapel in the farthest outlying districts of the Tabasco rubber fields. The Mass is interdicted. The three priests who remain—three priests, remember, for a population of some hundred and eighty thousand—dare not celebrate Mass openly, dare not baptize, officiate at marriages or administer any of the sacraments publicly. So far as outward appearances go, one might easily think that the Catholic Faith had disappeared from Tabasco.

The exiled Bishop now lives in the house of a lay friend in Mexico City, in a secluded street entirely out of the beaten track of official life. And even that retired corner of the capital is hardly to be called his home, for, as his friend explained to me, "he's hard to find, because he lives in an automobile most of the time, going from one place to another, keeping out of the eye of the Government and working day and night helping with pastoral visitations."

It was at the home of this friend that I saw the Bishop and talked with him, a big powerful man, in his early forties, a real Mexican in color and visage, dark skinned, with the high cheek bones of the Indian.

In spite of the trials which he is suffering, Bishop Diaz is hearty and cheerful. He can even make a joke

of quite manifest Mexican appearance. "Yes," he says, laughing, "the law now is that there can be no priests in Mexico unless they be real Mexicans—and they couldn't catch me on that account!"

EXILED THROUGH TRICK

The exile of Bishop Diaz was accomplished by a trick. For a period of some months the activities of the Tabasco State Government, headed by a governor bearing the appropriate name of Canabal, had been growing more and more violent. The personal lives of Bishop and clergy were so restricted and intimidated that even movement from house to house was becoming almost impossible. Nothing could be done without Government permit, and Government permit was never forthcoming without the most disagreeable and humiliating accompaniments. However, when a call came to Bishop Diaz to attend a conference of the Mexican Episcopate in the national capital, permission was readily granted. The Bishop left for Mexico City. He was not one hour outside his home State before the official gates were locked behind him. He cannot return to Tabasco unless he meets the demands of the State Government, and one of those demands, based on the national constitution of Mexico, is that he repudiate his religious vows. According to Article Five of the Constitution, all religious vows are prohibited. "If I will get married," said Bishop Diaz to me, "I may go back to my people. Not otherwise. I am a real Mexican. I am all right on that point. But, I must get married!"

PEOPLE REMAIN FAITHFUL

Asked what is resulting in his diocese on account of the interdiction of the Mass and the proscriptions against priests and sacraments, Bishop Diaz explained that, in spite of hardships, the people are faithful and loyal and are trying heroically to keep up the practice of their religion.

"It has always been hard in our country," said the Bishop. "Tabasco is the great rubber country of Mexico. The rubber forests begin a few miles out of San Juan Bautista, the capital, and stretch in an almost unbroken line to the frontier of Guatemala. There are few good roads, and there are many great rivers, for Tabasco is the best watered State of Mexican Union. But in the long rainy season there are heavy floods, the country becomes almost impassable, and the life of a priest, serving his scattered people in heroic, and now, with conditions as they are—well, humanly speaking, it looks sometimes as if it might mean the extinction of the Faith among our poor people. Without marriage, a deplorable social condition. Then children are born, but there can be no baptism. And then they begin to grow, and of course there can be no such thing as instruction in Christian doctrine. Today there is not one Catholic school in the diocese. Only the feeble strength of an old tradition can be left."

Humanly speaking it is, indeed, a hopeless situation, but there can be only a miracle could save us. And just now, with the persecution pressing us on every side, things are made even worse by the introduction into Tabasco of the so-called Schismatic Church, the Cismaticos, as the Mexicans call them. This, as you know, is a bogus church movement, really a political scheme, backed by the Government for the sole purpose of splitting our people into sects and breaking up the only element of union which keeps them one and united, their common religious faith.

THE SCHISMATIC CHURCH

Outside of Mexico City, Bishop Diaz explained, the attempt to establish a schismatic "national" church is being more vigorously pushed in the State of Tabasco than anywhere else. The Cismaticos are headed by a really political ex-priest, Perez by name, an old man over seventy, who has already two or three times been confined to an insane asylum. He is the only priest in the movement. But the national government, which has taken advantage of his weakness and bribed him to head the "national church" at the capital, finds it easy enough to supply other "priests" for the anti-Catholic governors of such outlying States as Tabasco.

"And thus," as Bishop Diaz remarks, "in spite of the great loyalty and fidelity of our poor people, if the thing is kept up long enough, the Faith must inevitably suffer. The masses of our people are simple, child-like and docile. You can see how, without instruction, without priests, or Mass or Sacraments, living without marriage and without baptism, a generation of indifferent, even of unbelievers, will soon grow up, to become the easy victims of the government power."

SOCIALIST GOVERNOR AN AUTOCRAT

The local government power in Tabasco is strong. With the open backing of the national government, Canabal, the State executive, rules virtually as an autocrat. A socialist, in full sympathy with all the radical tendencies of the national regime, he bends his forces to the destruction of the Christian life of the unfortunate people under him.

"And there is no redress," declared Bishop Diaz. "Time and again the most serious charges of

misconduct have been brought against him, but no court, no judge, will hear any case against him."

So flagrant, in fact, have been the many violations of even common law committed by Governor Canabal, that recently a memorial was presented to the Mexican National Congress formally charging him, with "attacks, sequestrations, confiscations, assassinations, robberies," and other crimes, "against individual liberty."

And no better evidence of the heroic fidelity of our Tabasco Catholics could be asked, Bishop Diaz declared, "than the open bringing of those charges against Governor Canabal by five of our leading laymen. No doubt they will be made to suffer terribly for their courageous action."

CLOSING OF CHURCHES IN TABASCO

The closing of the churches in the Tabasco Diocese is, in the opinion of the exiled Bishop, only a preliminary.

"According to the Mexican Constitution," the Bishop explained, "all the churches of the country are the property of the government. The government may do exactly as it pleases with them, and no one can stop it. It may take them from us, and give them to the Cismaticos, or turn them into barracks. Our old Cathedral at San Juan Bautista makes a rich prize for them. This edifice is one of the very oldest churches in Mexico. It stands on the first ground touched in Mexico by Cortez in 1519. The present Cathedral dates from 1614, and is therefore over three hundred years old—a real historical monument. Among its art treasures is a very famous painting, 'Our Lady of the Conquest,' which actually dates from Cortez's time. Some day before long, unless matters soon change, that old church may be a stable for the Governor's cavalry—and the Virgin of the Conquest may be hung in a museum. . . . or perhaps they will keep the Cathedral for the married clergy of the Cismaticos. For now, you see, to be a Catholic Bishop in Mexico, according to the law, you must not only be a Mexican born, but you must have a wife!"

DANIEL O'CONNELL

TRIBUTE PAID TO THE MEMORY OF GREAT LIBERATOR

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)

Dublin, Aug. 3.—Throughout Ireland this week and in many other parts of the world Irishmen are paying reverent tribute to Daniel O'Connell, August 6 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of this major hero of the race, once called the "Uncrowned King of Ireland."

At scores of local meetings, large and small, the brilliant career of O'Connell will be traversed by orators and his love and deeds for Ireland eulogized for the edification of the Irish youth of today. He will be termed the "Great Liberator" and the man who broke the Irish Penal Laws, the most abominable legislation an Irishman knows. His parliamentary adroitness, his wit, his brilliance as an orator, his magnetism as an organizer, his shrewdness as a lawyer will be told. He will be called the Moses of the Ireland of his day.

Bare facts of history will vindicate the glowing terms the orators use. For they will show an almost matchless leadership in many things.

Daniel O'Connell came of Kerry ancestors who had been staggered by the Penal Laws. Against these laws he hurled his life, invoking his own methods, incurring home opposition, overcoming it, and triumphing peacefully with a brilliance scarcely equalled since. From the time he quit France as the French Revolution broke, after a brief quest for education abroad, it was his life work.

He was nineteen when he took up the study of law in Ireland, and twenty-three when he was called to the Irish Bar in 1798. Beginning his public life, he faced exclusion from Parliament and from the inner bar and high civil and military office because of his Catholic faith. True, the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 had ameliorated the lot of Catholics, but to a young patriot conditions still were intolerable.

Young O'Connell believed, strong as was his abhorrence of the unjust English laws, that moderation and parliamentary procedure were the solutions. He decried violence, and never admitted the justification of the French Revolution. He did believe, however, in demanding justice as a right, and not as a condescending gift, and he looked to the Irish masses to make the demand good. In 1800 then, he bent his efforts to that end, plunging into the meetings of the Catholic Committee in Dublin, vivifying it, speedily according to its leading, Sheer personal effort was his lever for lifting himself—keenness, bitterest sarcasm when the occasion demanded, fierceness that would ignite the coldest heart, gentleness that would move the hardest.

By 1810, O'Connell was ready to act. He moved to form local committees everywhere in Ireland. Immediately there was a clash with the Government, but O'Connell triumphed. His committee meetings were forbidden; local authorities, looking to him, disregarded the ban. His Dublin leaders were