

Political Rumbings

Written for The Catholic Register

Not only in Europe are there political rumbings to be heard; even Canada is alive with peculiar rumors, and the press is in a general ferment. Strange things are taking place and queer actions are recorded. The situation, of itself, is calculated to afford sufficient ground for speculation; and a press that is ever anxious for the new and the sensational, has no opportunity of adding to the turmoil. Yet when we calmly and without prejudice look the situation in the face, we learn that it differs very little from the situations of the past. Party strife reaches its acme during periods of the general elections, but from one battle to another there are mutterings and rumbings that are not without their significance. Each one seems to try to outbid his neighbor in producing that which is startling, while not one seems to be able to do more than speculate and to paint pictures from the fancy of what he would like to have transformed into realities. We have never been easily carried away, on the spur of the moment, by the marsh-lights that flicker over the surface of Canadian politics, we have always found it the safer and better policy to calmly await the developments that must necessarily come with the practical testing of theories and the serious application of schemes. There is no crucible like that of the House of Commons wherein to analyze any conglomerate of a political kind. There the chemical process is effective, and, as a rule, when the metal is extracted from the rough ore, we find that the mass of rejectable matter outweighs enormously that which is of utility. Consequently we do not purpose entering into any minute study of the various, and, in some cases, apparently contradictory statements that we have heard from end to end of the land. We can simply say that the return of the Premier, after his triumphal journey over Europe, will lead into insignificance aught that starts, to-day, the political domain with its novelty and sensationalism, while the coming session—which cannot fail to be an important one—will divest the situation of all its glamor and set the minds of the various elements at rest as to the aims and intentions of the present administration.

Last week no less an authority than The World gave it as an opinion that we would have a general election for the Dominion within three months, and that the Ontario elections would follow immediately afterwards. It may be possible that The World is in the secrets of Premier Ross and that it has an inkling of what his intentions may be, and the contrary is equally possible. However, one thing is certain—The World is absolutely astray as far as the Dominion Government is concerned. Not only is there no intention of holding general elections within the coming three months, but the constitution forbids the taking of such a step—even were the Government anxious to spring a surprise upon the people. It is a well known principle, contained in expressed terms in our constitution that after a census of the Dominion there must be a redistribution of seats—of constituencies—before a general election can be held. And that rearrangement or readjustment in accordance with the population as presented by the census returns, can only be effected during a session of the Federal Parliament. Consequently another session is an absolute necessity before an appeal to the people can take place. This alone should suffice to show how wild are the dreams of some unreflecting journalists, or how little they have studied that which is the essential guide of all governments in such matters.

And even were there no constitutional impediment in the way of a general election, we would like to know what the Government would have to gain by attempting to snatch a hasty verdict from the people. It has a sufficient majority at its back to-day to create a reasonable assurance of success whenever a general election may come. Its opponents have no better policy at this moment to present than they have had for the last six years, nor do they show any signs of engendering some new and striking policy within a measurable future. The success that the Premier and his colleagues have had both in England and in France, is such that they would be either politically demoralized or else phenomenally disinterested, were they to forego the advantages that must accrue to them through the presentation on the floor of Parliament of their report from beyond the ocean. Moreover, they owe it to the country and to Parliament to lay before the Federal legislature the results of their mission abroad. Under these circumstances, were there none other to invoke, the rumor of a general election becomes an absurdity.

We have been asked to express an opinion concerning the touring throughout Ontario of the Hon. Minister of Public Works, and regarding the policy which he so emphatically propounds, despite the disagreement of other supporters of the present party in power. As to the issue of Protection—whether it be partial or absolute—in contradistinction to that of Free Trade, we do not consider it our duty, nor does it exactly belong to our sphere, to pronounce. But we are confident that when the time comes, when the Government shall meet Parliament in the regular way,

all these apparent differences will be merged in one clear and exact statement, which will leave the public of Canada in a condition of certainty as to what may be expected from the Government. It must be remarked that the Hon. Minister has ably given expression to his personal views and his individually-formed theories, the Premier is absent, the other members of the Cabinet are silent on the subject, and almost the entire deputation from the Province of Quebec has refrained from any participation in the present discussion. Like in the question of The World's rumored elections, so in that of the present sensational campaign, there is a constitutional point of major importance that must not be overlooked. Therefore, we can but await the settling of that point by the only tribunal of competence in such matters—that is by the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled.

Dr. De Costa in Montreal

(Dr. F. B. De Costa in The New York Freeman's Journal.)

Travelling from New York to Canada by the Delaware and Hudson Road, one finds it a scenic and historic route, Cliff Haven and the Catholic Summer School being taken on the way.

Though the season is over a letter or two might well be devoted to the subject of Cliff Haven, for, notwithstanding much has been written about the place, singularly enough, its merits are far from being appreciated, since, with a proper understanding of its physical and intellectual attractions, the hundreds now attracted thither should be swelled to thousands. This indicates that while much has been done much remains to be accomplished.

The establishment of the summer school at Cliff Haven was a bold venture of faith, yet the confidence exhibited by its founders has been more than justified. For beauty its commanding situation could not be excelled, while the architecture, instead of being rustic, as many suppose, is most elegant and imposing. Model drainage puts the healthfulness of a naturally healthy situation beyond all question, and the lavish use of electricity is capable of turning night into day. This school forms the ideal of a Christian and, consequently, a democratic community. The feast of natural scenery, combined with the feast of reason and the flow of soul, is rich indeed. Consequently the intending Canadian tourist finds the time allotted to Cliff Haven vanishing swiftly, and as he finally speeds away on the train for Montreal, the school takes its place among midsummer-night dreams. Cliff Haven has a great future in store, and in coming days will stand intimately connected with the intellectual advancement of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Our theme, however, is Montreal, substantially a Catholic city, and the City of Mary. Nevertheless, a first-class guide book is still needed, one that would supersede the claims of a book like that entitled "A Yankee in Montreal," and at the same time deal with Catholic interests in a full and unprejudiced way.

It is needless to observe that of late years Montreal has shown an immense growth. In October, 1535, Jacques Cartier reached the present site of Montreal and found an Indian city called "Hockeloga." It was the stone age,

and a formidable fortification provided with stone ammunition for use with the hand was the real man's citadel, but when Champlain appeared upon the scene at the beginning of the next century all traces of Hockeloga had passed away. The museum contains only a few recently discovered relics of the ancient town. It was not until 1642 that Maisonneuve founded the present Montreal, his object being to convert the Indians. The strong foundations of the Catholic faith were soon laid. Early the Sulpicians were on the ground and came into the possession of large tracts of land, which they have held ever since, to the immense advantage of religion, education and all charities. They found the Island of Montreal the abode of savages and gave it to civilization. The Order earned all the advantages now enjoyed by the sacrifices and labors of its pioneers. The critic who deals in unfriendly words does not take this into account.

Montreal is all history and antiquities, and it would be useless to dwell now upon the olden times, however much they may savor of romance. The population of nearly 350,000 souls is mixed, and the Irish who rally around St. Patrick's Church number about 12,000.

After seeing the Cathedral and the Church of Notre Dame, one naturally makes his way to St. Patrick's, built by the Sulpicians, who have the work in charge. The edifice is one that would justify considerable description, being stately, well situated and possessing almost cathedral proportions. Though no stranger to Montreal, I saw the church for the first time. The previous rector devoted much of his life to make the church what it is, and the Rev. Father Martin Callahan has followed up the work by nearly freeing it from debt. But a trifle of indebtedness remains. It is a most enjoyable church, and notwithstanding its stately and splendid, one feels at home. Perhaps in this, alone of all the churches in Montreal, does the stranger have the home feeling. The hearty Irishman is in evidence, and now and then a good, rich brogue, which politicians admire before and at election, overrides the local "patois," so that one might almost fancy himself at home.

While we were there, Father Callahan preached a sermon on education, speaking particularly of the Catholic High School, which he is seeking to make one of the best schools of its kind. Certainly the Catholics of Montreal are capable of achieving this result, and it will not be the fault of the rector of St. Patrick's if the school is not placed on a secure footing. This means a great deal of labor, money and sacrifice.

We found the school system of Canada in a much better condition than that of the United States. With us, Protestants entertain the notion that it is neither practical nor desirable to have a division of the school fund, and thus force Catholics to support their own schools and pay their quota for the other schools besides. It is hard to make our American non-Catholic brethren understand that any other plan could be carried out. If the school funds were divided the Republic might fall. In fact, the plan advocated in the United States by Catholics forms a conspiracy against the Government and the whole social order. If the fund were divided, liberty might perish! People of this persuasion should make a trip to Canada. There the school fund is divided. Each class has, if it wishes, its own schools, and the foundations of the Parliament House do not jar. A special article should be devoted to this subject, and, therefore, it is now passed with a few remarks.

Catholics, however, as well as Protestants need to know the condition of the educational system across the line, where Catholic, Protestant and Jew each have the benefit of funds, no one being the worse off for the arrangement, which is quite satisfactory. It should be so in the United States, and the agitation along these lines may be kept up with a fair prospect of success. With schools conducted on religious principles with religious instruction, the moral atmosphere of Canada is superior to that of the United States, and all social interior are on a better footing. Canada is now giving an effective object lesson in toleration, and the success that attends the system should commend it to our own people. This system is one that Catholics gave to the Protestants of Canada, and non-Catholics in the United States, and should see the propriety of giving this liberty to Catholics.

There is a work going on in connection with St. Patrick's that may well be mentioned, though Father Callahan is averse to advertising. I refer to a work for the Chinese, in which the Father breaks the Protestant record, in that it is successfully carried on without the aid of young lady teachers. The labor in this department is done by Christian brothers, who are doing such a splendid work all over Canada. The popular notion is that it requires a special attraction to bring the Chinese of America under the influence of the Gospel. Father Callahan has disposed of this idea, and quite a large work is carried on by the usual methods,

the Chinese in Montreal being eager to receive baptism and enjoy the blessings of the Church. The same spirit that has made the Chinese in China martyrs to the Faith is being developed in Montreal at the present time. For America the work at St. Patrick's is really phenomenal, and should excite emulation in such a great city as New York.

It would, however, prove impossible to express a true idea of a great city like Montreal, since it impresses different minds in different ways. A general survey may be nevertheless had from the mountain by which it is dominated. To the top of this notable elevation the Indians led Jacques Cartier in 1535 when the whole country was glowing in the splendor of the autumnal foliage. Below him lay the fortified Hockeloga. He little dreamed that one day a city with such noble institutions and monuments would one day take the place of the Indian town. The prospect is certainly impressive, while the circular tour around the mountain reveals unbounded opportunities for future expansion. In this respect it is a type and promise of the future of all Canada, and which has a territory larger than that of the United States, including regions that will probably furnish grain for the world, when the present wheat fields of the

United States have been given over to more profitable uses, thus changing the agricultural conditions of North America. Canada is a country of the largest possibilities, and yet men are trying to revive the subject of its annexation to the United States. Do they want to make our own country so large that it will fall in pieces?

What impressed me most was the Catholicity of the land over the line. The Catholic atmosphere, after long dwelling in the regions of cold agnosticism, proved most grateful. A visit to Canada is equal to a reinforcement of Faith. Montreal is the City of Mary, and her most gracious influence is attested on every hand. One comes to like Canada.

PERSONALS

Rev. Father Hand, of St. Paul's was presented with an address by his parishioners on Monday evening last. Rev. Father Brennan, of St. Basil's, has returned from his trip to Ireland.

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- We recommend Axminster carpets for drawing-rooms rather than Brussels, and have over 75 patterns to select from—beautiful verdure self-color effects in rose, greens, and blues, and also some beautiful designs after the style of Oriental rugs.
- The Royal Albert Axminster has perhaps no equal for hard wear. We can always recommend it.
- The silky worsted Victorian Axminster is a carpet made in fine delicate tones for the most luxurious drawing-rooms. We have a few lines of Victorian Axminster to clear at \$1.75 that were \$3.25.
- This season we have gone in for 4-4 stair carpets in Axminster. These are used to match Oriental rugs in lower halls.
- Our seamless Axminster Carpets are made in colors and designs to correspond with the decorations of the home and are sold at \$6.50, \$8.00, \$9.00, \$10.50 and \$12.50 square yard.
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- Yaproc Rugs, 6.6x5.11, \$24.50; 12.8x8.3, \$42.50; 13.8 10.6, \$75.00, and other sizes.
- Dunagan Hand Tufted Rugs, the product of the Indian of Ireland. \$35.00, and also to order at same rate per square yard.
- Afghan Rugs, 9.6x6.10, \$75.00.
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