

The Rt. Rev. Michael Ott, O.S.B., Our New Abbot.

(Continued from page 1.)

In the afternoon of July 23, the day of election itself, Abbot Peter sent the following message, so happily expressed:

ST. JOSEPH, MINN., July 23, 1919.

Rt. Rev. Ernest, MÜNSTER, SASK.

I consent. Wired to abbot-elect for his consent. He is climbing Mount Rainier to-day. Peter Engel.

We felt grateful to Abbot Peter at the reception of this generous message, but the suspense grew as we waited and waited for an answer from the abbot-elect. The die had been cast and we could only pray that the abbot-elect would accept the election as a call from on high.

The next morning at last the longed-for message arrived in Münster. The Rev. Father Rudolph immediately started with his car for Münster, accompanied by the Rt. Rev. Praeses, who, much to our amusement, was all excitement, quite as we ourselves, so much so that, upon returning from Münster he found himself wearing neither hat nor cap. The suspense reached its highest pitch when the car which bore the messengers came within sight. The community surrounded the conveyance as it arrived, but before it came to a stop we saw and felt that our prayers had been heard, for the good Praeses could retain himself no longer, but, waving the telegram from his seat in the conveyance, he burst out to rejoice with us in triumphant exultation with the exclamation: "It's all right! We've got him!"

Our hearty "Deo Gratias" came from several hearts simultaneously.

And now, kind reader, whom did we get? Hear the message as one of the Fathers reads aloud:

"TACOMA, WASH., July 23, 1919.

Rt. Rev. Abbot Ernest,

ST. PETER'S ABBEY, MÜNSTER, SASK.

Taking it to be the will of God, I accept election with a heavy heart, hoping that with the help of God and the co-operation of the Reverend Fathers, I shall be able to bear the heavy burden. Abbot Peter wired me his consent today.

Michael Ott."

This beautiful message reads like an inspiration from above. We sincerely believe the Holy Ghost directed and guided us in the election, and the telegram from our abbot-elect breathes a spirit of sacrifice and resignation; surely the Holy Ghost inspired him with the noble answer. The Very Rev. Michael Ott, O. S. B., Subprior of St. John's Abbey, was unanimously elected on first ballot to replace the late beloved Abbot Bruno. The community was nearly beside itself with inward and holy joy. The church bell joyfully announced the glad tidings of the successful issue of the election, and the same day the Fathers dispersed with a new heart and renewed courage to resume their duties at their missions, and the Rt. Rev. Abbot Ernest back to Newark, N. J., pleased with the spirit exhibited by the Fathers in the election and the resignation of the abbot-elect to the will of the Almighty.

A year ago the day of his election the abbot-elect was in our midst here. About the middle of July he opened the annual Retreat for the community active in the Colony. After the Retreat, he in company with the Rt. Rev. Abbot Bruno and a number of the Fathers made a tour through the Colony, visiting all the parishes. He repeatedly evinced a great interest in the Colony and even expressed a rather strong desire to labor here. When Abbot Bruno thanked him in the name of the community for the kindly and useful instructions he imparted to us in his lectures and conferences, Father Michael responded by congratulating the abbot and his community upon the brotherly and charitable spirit prevalent amongst them. He expressed his pleasure at being in our midst and his regret at being obliged to leave the Colony soon. He said, however, this was not the last time he would be in our midst. Little did he, still less did we reckon that within a year it should please God to place him at the head of our community. He was a good friend of the lamented Abbot Bruno, and we recognize in him not a few traits of semblance to our late Abbot.

It is with some misgiving that we now proceed to record a few points of the past history of our abbot-elect, fearing lest we should offend his modesty and love of reserve. Nevertheless, we realize that at least a few points will be appreciated by our readers and we furthermore believe this to be not only salutary and serviceable, but even necessary.

Father Michael completed his classical studies at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., where he distinguished himself in department and application. He entered the Benedictine Novitiate and was professed a year later, June 24, 1889, at the age of nineteen.

The talented cleric was sent to Rome to pursue his higher studies at the Anselmianum, the famous institution then just recently refounded by Pope Leo XIII of blessed memory, and handed over to the Benedictine Order. This institution was to serve as store-house and source of learning primarily for the more talented young Benedictines from all parts of the world, and is supported by the Benedictine houses which one finds all over the globe. It has served its purpose admirably; its professors are Benedictines chosen from all over the world for their learning and teaching ability. The first cleric to be sent from St. John's to this institution was Fr. Michael. He received the Major Orders by the hands of a member of the sacred college of cardinals and was raised to the priesthood June 29, 1894. His twenty-fifth anniversary, therefore, fell on June 29 of the current year.

Having completed his course of studies and obtained his degrees, Father Michael returned to St. John's, a doctor of Philosophy. Here he held various positions and occupied numerous professional chairs. He was appointed disciplinarian of the commercial department and later became Censor over the student staff of editors or St. John's University "Record", as well as superintendent over the student librarians. He was also assistant Father Confessor for the students and superintendent of the institution's printing establishment, where he a few years ago introduced the monotype, cylinder press, and paper folder. During his censorship the "Record" has made notable strides on the field of college journalism; and the students' library, besides being greatly enlarged and a reading room added, was filled to its capacity with all that a Catholic college student can wish for in the line of stories, essays, encyclopedias, dictionaries and an extensive variety of papers and magazines in several languages.

Father Michael is a professor of high repute. Among the branches which have been commonly taught by him are the following: English, Latin, German, Greek, French, Philosophy, Ethics. For many years also he was Prefect of Studies, and the high grade of

thoroughness and excellency for which St. John's course of studies has become famous during Father Michael's many years of administration, bears no doubt as to his capabilities as an educator. We realize that the election of Father Michael as our abbot leaves a vacancy in many a chair of the staff of professors at St. John's University, difficult to refill, and students of the college and seminaries will keenly feel the loss of their esteemed professor.

Father Michael's activities have not been restricted to the classroom. During the vacations he assisted at various parishes and missions, and even during the school year he was active in such work; he would leave the Abbey on Saturday for St. Paul or some other places where help was needed, and return on Monday to resume his duties as professor. He has conducted a number of spiritual Retreats for communities of Sisters, of Brothers and of Priests.

Our abbot-elect enjoys also a high literary reputation and is well known in the literary world. For a proof of Father Michael's literary abilities we would refer our readers to any volume of the Catholic Encyclopedia; to this great work Father Michael has been one of the most generous contributors. Some of his articles have appeared in valuable magazines. He has given evidence also of an author of no mean ability of the short story; one of his beautiful and touching stories is published by Benziger Bros.' edition of short stories by renowned Catholic authors.

Father Michael has a large circle of friends in this country as well as in the old, where he has done considerable travelling. He has paid extensive visits through Italy, France, Germany etc. and England, where he gained the acquaintance and friendship of a number of great personages, among them Cardinal Gasquet, O. S. B., while the latter was still monk and abbot in England.

As monk of the Abbey of St. John's, Father Michael has for many years held the office of subprior, and as a member of the teaching faculty of the university, he was also at the time of his election secretary on the board of administration and instruction. We are, as far as our glad hearts permit, in sympathy with the Rt. Rev. Abbot Peter and his community at the loss of their subprior, where Father Michael has ever been an esteemed confrere, both because of his learning and his many sterling qualities as Benedictine monk. We know his leaving St. John's will be deeply regretted by all the community. Still, we wish to remind them that we stand badly in need of our abbot-elect; we wish to recall also to their minds the noble and sacrificing call to which he has considered his sacred duty to respond. We express to the Rt. Rev. Abbot Peter our hearty thanks for his consenting to sacrifice the man we have chosen. To be sure, we have not been sparing in our request;

we have chosen the man we deemed the most fit to promote the welfare of our community and of St. Peter's Colony, regardless of the feelings of others, we felt it a duty to do so, and thanks to God, Abbot Peter has generously consented without a murmur, and the abbot-elect considered it his solemn duty to accept the election as the call of God. What a sacrifice we have asked of our abbot-elect! Only those who are thoroughly acquainted with the conditions at St. John's and the conditions at St. Peter's, can realize what a sacrifice it means to our new abbot, and only those acquainted with the new abbot understand what a sacrifice it means too for the community of St. John's. Still, it is an honor for the community to have one of its members chosen as an abbot, and with this sentiment uppermost in our glad hearts rather than with sentiments of sympathy, which would tend to dampen our joy, we extend to the Rt. Rev. Abbot Peter and his community our hearty congratulations. We thank likewise the Rt. Rev. Praeses for his kindly interest, aid and enthusiasm.

We express to our Abbot-elect our heartiest congratulations and every good wish; we extend to him a most cordial welcome and hope he will soon be able to be in our midst, for we feel that every day he shall spend at our monastery will be a valuable aid. As readily and eagerly as we have offered to the man of our choice the honor of wearing the pectoral cross, do we pledge ourselves to assist him to carry the cross of burdens which rests upon his shoulders. He may rest assured of our ready co-operation in all his undertakings. We in turn are assured he will be a worthy successor to the late Abbot Bruno. Considering his wide experience in the field of education and aware of the fact that he realizes the necessity of a higher education to our young men, we hesitate not to prophesy the dawn and opening of a new era in the history of the Colony. The Colonists, we are sure, will meet the new Abbot with the same love, joy and good will with which the community is longing to receive him. He is wide awake to their needs and wants. We are also certain our good bishop will find in him a capable advisor and true friend.

We must now wait in patience for the confirmation from Rome, which may take even two months or over, possibly less. In the meantime, we beg our friends and readers, remember the Abbot-elect in their prayers. We assure our new Abbot he is daily in our thoughts and prayers and that we anxiously await his blessing. We hope and pray that he may preside over the community and govern the spiritual affairs of the Colony for many, many years with evident success and God's choicest blessings. Ad multos annos!

Foreign News

LONDON. — The clause of the alien bill restricting the amount of alien labor to be employed by any person, company or firm in the country to ten per cent of the working staff, was rejected by the committee of the whole in the house of commons.

— Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, arrived at Southampton today. He declared his views of Nation-Wide Prohibition by stating that Prohibition was "all rot" and he said further that it was a physical impossibility to compel the whole country to remain dry.

— Civil disturbances in different parts of the country have been as destructive as anything committed by the military. At Swindon gangs of youths and discharged Imperial soldiers looted twenty business premises and burned the flagstaff outside the municipal buildings. At Louton, where the town hall was burned, further disturbances were quelled by the police charges. Some men and four women were arrested and further arrests are imminent. At Coventry many shops were attacked, forty persons were injured, some dangerously and police assistance was sought from Birmingham. At Bilston the mob tore down a wall and used the bricks as missiles against the police. Additional police were summoned from neighboring towns.

— On the fourth day of the great coal miners' strike almost 25,000 men laid down their tools. Ten thousand went out July 23rd in Nottingham and Derby, while 10,000 men in Monmouth and 75,000 Lancashire workers went back to save the mines from destruction, but coupling their return with a strong protest. Premier Lloyd George and several members of the cabinet, including Bonar Law, Sir Auckland Geddes, and Sir Robert S. Heron, conferred with the mine owners today and affected a peaceful settlement.

Memorial To Nuns of Battlefield

The site for the "Memorial to the Nuns of the Battlefield" to be erected in Washington by the Ladies' Auxiliaries to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, being designated, and the design approved by the Fine Arts Commission, the National Capital will have the distinction

of having the first national memorial that the Catholic Church or the Irish race has erected in America, and the first memorial in the world to perpetuate the memory of the war's first nurses—the Sisterhoods, says the special correspondent to The Catholic Tribune.

The erection of this memorial was inaugurated by Mrs. Ellen Ryan Jolly of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, who at the National Con-

vention of the Order in 1914, in Norfolk, appealed to the organization to do honor to the saintly women who served their country well, by erecting a memorial worthy of them and the order they represented.

The resolution authorizing the memorial to be erected on government property in the National Capital was put through Congress by Hon. Ambrose Kennedy of

Rhode Island, who in his address in the House of Representatives said: "Monuments to the memory of departed heroes are the immortal legacies bequeathed to future generations; they are the silent footprints of history upon the pages of time. Like the songs of a country, they are a part of the life of a people. The Nuns of the Battlefield are the immortal heroines of the Civil War in America."

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