

The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, MONDAY MORNING, NOV. 21, 1910.

REV. C. J. McLAUGHLIN'S LETTER.

In a letter, addressed to the Editor of The Standard, which appears in the current issue of the New Freeman, Rev. C. J. McLaughlin, of Milltown, accuses The Standard of not devoting sufficient space to the Eucharistic Congress, when it was in progress in Montreal, and of giving undue prominence to matters which he regards as hostile to his church. This communication was originally sent to the editor of The Standard, but was not published in this journal for reasons which will later become apparent.

With regard to the reports of the Eucharistic Congress the writer says:—"All the leading journals of the continent send representatives. Daily seems to vie with daily in reporting the most minute details of the doings of the great religious gathering. Your 'Journal, however, and the other St. John dailies can 'give but a meagre report.'"

Anyone familiar with the routine of a newspaper office is aware that the space which can be devoted to any one subject must be governed by the amount of other important news to be handled. The Eucharistic Congress was held simultaneously with the Dominion Exhibition in St. John, and the celebration of the Bicentenary of the Church of England at Halifax. The Standard, in common with other St. John papers, devoted many columns of space to it. Had the event occurred at a more favorable time, it would undoubtedly have been given even more extended notice, but, under the circumstances, we do not consider the writer has any just ground for complaint.

Rev. Fr. McLaughlin proceeds to criticize The Standard for devoting "a long leader in the editorial column" to copiously quoted extracts from not too friendly "journals, under the caption 'The Aftermath of the Eucharistic Congress.' This Aftermath comment," he continues, "was seemingly intended to take on the form of a serial story, and on Oct. 7th we have the very interesting article 'The Speaker's Mistake.'"

The extracts to which Rev. Fr. McLaughlin takes exception were the editorial opinions expressed by such prominent journals as the Toronto World, the Winnipeg Telegram, the Ottawa Citizen, and the Winnipeg Tribune. They had relation to incidents in connection with the Eucharistic Congress with which everyone was familiar. We have yet to be convinced that The Standard should exclude from its columns the opinions of its contemporaries on questions of public interest, because these opinions may not be pleasing to all sections of the community.

The Standard's comment was absolutely impartial. It merely referred to these incidents as raising "questions which will doubtless be the subject of much animated debate, even if there be no definite outcome." That this comment was justified may be seen by reference to our report on Saturday of the proceedings in Parliament. Questions were asked by Col. Hughes and Dr. Sprague bearing on the incidents referred to, and they will doubtless, as The Standard said, be the subject of much animated debate. Would Rev. Fr. McLaughlin desire us also to exclude the opinions of these gentlemen and others because they do not agree with him?

"On September 26," the writer continues, "in your 'news column under large black and glowing headlines, 'the bumpy vapors of a Moncton preacher must be reported for the edification of your readers. On Oct. 21st, the uncouth and blasphemous utterances of another 'ministerial wanderer are served up as news on the front page, of course, and lastly Catholic shareholders and subscribers to The Standard must see on November 17th three columns devoted to the mad hallucinations and ravings of a professedly Christian body of men 'hurling their noisy anathemas and gnashing their teeth 'at the Mother Church of Nations.'"

Rev. Fr. McLaughlin would have The Standard report the proceedings of the Eucharistic Congress in full, but he would debar The Standard from reporting the opinions of men of other faiths, or the speeches delivered at a banquet of the St. John District Lodge L. O. A. on November 5, which was open to the press. From the standpoint of a newspaper, designed to publish the news irrespective of opinions, his attitude is indefensible. Had The Standard taken the ground editorially that the remarks to which he takes exception were justified, he might have had the right to complain that this journal was expressing opinions calculated to offend "two fifths" of the population of the province." But The Standard took no such ground. If the Ancient Order of Hibernians or the Knights of Columbus, should see fit to hold a banquet and give voice to opinions more in keeping with Rev. Fr. McLaughlin's views, The Standard as a newspaper would give them equal publicity. The columns of this newspaper are open at all times for news of interest to its Catholic readers. We would welcome a greater willingness on the part of those concerned to supply it.

The letter which Rev. Fr. McLaughlin sent to The Standard was not published because we did not believe that it would serve any good purpose to stir up religious strife and bitterness. Some of the phrases used in his communication would, we considered, have that tendency, and in justice to The Standard's attitude we quote:—"The course, vulgar and uncouth utterances of a brood of misguided zealots"; "Bumpy vapors of a Moncton preacher"; "Uncouth and blasphemous utterances of another ministerial wanderer"; "mad hallucinations and ravings of a professedly Christian body of men hurling their noisy anathemas and gnashing their teeth at the 'Mother Church of Nations'"; "Magnanimous and superlatively live loyal patriots who suffered periodical 'attacks of Romaphobia'; "If those ignoble souls who 'infect our country desire to deliver themselves of the

"mad phantoms of a diseased mind"; "Breeder of dissension and strife"; "A vile campaign."

Having read these opinions expressed by Rev. Fr. McLaughlin, we turned to the following question which he asked towards the close of his letter:—"Now, Mr. Editor, I ask you in all sincerity, does the discrimination of such vituperative utterances as I have specifically referred to in this letter make for better citizenship, or help build up that united Canada for which we are all striving and which we so ardently desire to see 'realized?' The Standard felt that it could best answer this question by refusing to publish Rev. Fr. McLaughlin's letter as it neither tended to further the cause of a united Canada, which he has at heart, nor to add dignity to the attitude of the Great Church to which he belongs.

SIR WILFRID AND THE SENATE.

If Sir Wilfrid's experience in his last appointment to the Senate is a bitter one, it is well deserved. Whether it will result in reflection and reform on his part is quite another thing, and exceedingly doubtful. The appointment of Mr. Louis Laverne, M. P. for Drummond-Arthabaska, and the circumstances surrounding it, show Sir Wilfrid and his methods at their worst. Not a glimmer of appreciation of the purpose and dignity of the institution as a part of our constitutional system appears to have crossed his mind. Nor did he display the least symptom of a realization of the high trust and great responsibility resting in him as the virtual fountain of appointing power.

His highest conception of the Senate seemed to be that of a convenient device, to enable him to inveigle into a trap from which there was no escape, a man whom he had first disappointed, then cast off, whom he feared to face in open honorable fight, and whom he wished to utterly destroy by unfair methods. His apparent appraisal of himself as trustee for the people and guardian of the Senate's honor was that, as such trustee and guardian, he was at liberty to violate all conditions of the trust, and disregard all guarantees of the honor, by using both as a machine to carry out his own petty and personal ends.

Mr. Louis Laverne was elected by his district to represent them in the Commons for the term beginning in 1908. The electors might have made a better choice, but that was their own business, and we have no quarrel with them; 1910 came and was nearly spent when Sir Wilfrid became sore pressed by Bourassa. He must be crushed "coute que coute," Sir Wilfrid feared him, his vanity was wounded by him, his weaknesses pitifully shown up, his popularity threatened, and his headship in Quebec placed in jeopardy. To prepare a pit for him and to entice him to enter therein and then to do for him once for all—that was Sir Wilfrid's plan. The most deadly pit he believed to be Drummond-Arthabaska, and he set himself to prepare the way.

There were two obstacles, the people's representative had not filled the term for which he was elected, and consequently had not fulfilled the trust for which his electors had chosen him—that was one. The other was as to what Mr. Louis Laverne might think a fair price for the sale of his trust held for the people, and handing it over, not to his people, but to Sir Wilfrid. Mr. Louis Laverne did not believe his value by over modesty in his demands. He would drop his trust and play into the hands of Sir Wilfrid for a seat in the Senate and a pension for life, nothing less. It was a stiff price. But then Sir Wilfrid would not have to pay it; the country would be made to provide. The sum was immaterial, to Sir Wilfrid. Senators live long, it is said, and Mr. Louis Laverne could count on say 15 years of green old age. Fifteen multiplied by \$2,500 makes \$37,500 plus travelling expenses (he will get a pass) plus yearly dole of stationery, French clocks, and electric vibrators—all this out of the country's pocket, not Sir Wilfrid's. Yes, it certainly was cheap looked at that way.

This little matter negotiated there was another difficulty—at least it would have been a difficulty to a trustee with any proper sense of his duties as trustee, and guardian of the people's rights in the Senate, and the Senate's place in the constitutional system of the country. The vacancy in the Senate was caused by the death of Senator Drummond, of Montreal, a representative of the English people of Quebec, a business man of great merit and wide reputation, and a man by education and ability fitted to adorn the Senate and represent the people. A high-minded trustee—acting for Canada, not himself—would have sought to choose a man at least equal to Senator Drummond, and to preserve to the English portion of Quebec their fast dwindling privileges and rights. No such scruples troubled Sir Wilfrid. What cared he for the people's rights or the Senate's effectiveness so long as he could kick Bourassa?

To a high-minded trustee another thought might have occurred. The virtue of a senate lies in its fair and able representation; its weakness in unfair, inferior and partisan representation. Today the Senate contains twenty-two Liberal-Conservatives, mostly between seventy and ninety years of age, and sixty-four Liberals, all but two of whom have been appointed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It might have occurred to a fair-minded trustee that under these circumstances, it would have been wise to fill a Conservative and English vacancy, by a Conservative and English senator. It did not so occur to Sir Wilfrid. Death subtracted one English and Conservative from the small number remaining, and Sir Wilfrid thanked death for providing an opportunity and straightway added to the partisan overloading, which is fast making of the Senate a bye word and reproach.

In the days of opposition the Liberal leader and the Liberal following were unanimous in their desire, and strong in their promises, to reform and strengthen the Senate—to make it a powerful and dignified body and a worthy part of our governmental machinery. Sir Wilfrid has debased and belittled one of the three great branches of our constitutional system, and appears to have done it deliberately and in opposition to the remonstrances of his friends, the criticism of his opponents and the just expectations of all Canadians who love fair play and desire good government.

Current Comment

(Calgary Herald.)
A man might have gone to sleep 30 years ago and have woken up last week over a newspaper. In one paper he would have found a Lord Robert Cecil, a Mr. Gladstone, a Mr. Wyndham, a Churchill, and in the other he would find the same names.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)
Lord Lansdowne may be one of the effete peers; but he knows something of strategy. His demand that the Government bill dealing with the veto of the Lords be produced makes Mr. Asquith show his hand, and the card that is exposed is not a trump.

(Woodstock Sentinel.)
Students at the University of Michigan last year consumed 132,210 cigars, 33,180 boxes of cigarettes, 52,000 packages of smoking tobacco, and 6500 pounds of chewing tobacco. And yet there are people who continue to question the value of higher education.

(London Free Press.)
Mr. R. L. Borden shows the masterhand of leadership in the reorganization of the Dominion Opposition.

The Standard's Old Reporter

I accompanied the city engineer on his weekly tour of inspection of the Loch Lomond water system, Saturday. Probably he did not learn much about the water system—it was dark long before we reached Robertson reservoir, but incidentally I discovered the key to the character of the city engineer—the explanation of his imperturbable serenity in the face of the storms of controversy that surge round the water and sewerage board, of why his apparent simplicity when besieged by questions is never construed by the older aldermen as lack of knowledge or technical ability.

We left the city at 3 o'clock. Out by the Little River reservoir we stopped for a while, and for a few minutes I thought the engineer had become a country paddler. However, it appeared that the articles he produced from the back of the buggy were tools or gauges for the caretaker. The engineer looked around and we went on along the public highway. Presently we came to the new road built this summer to facilitate the work of repairing the concrete conduit. It runs away from the main road to about the middle of the concrete pipe, straight as a die, and is an object lesson in the art of road making through a swampy land. It has been built in strict accordance with the three principles of road making laid down by Good Roads Campbell, drainage, drainage, drainage. The roadbed is arched to drain off the water; deep ditches extend the whole length of it; permanent culverts have been constructed where under-drainage is essential.

When we reached the conduit, the horse was stalled in a lean-to, and we followed him upward along the line of the pipe for half a mile or more. Here and there we came upon places that had evidently been excavated during the summer. "We've had to uncover the pipe at lots of places to get at leaks this summer," said the engineer. "Most of them have been repaired without shutting off the water completely."

Many Small Leaks.

At every few rods we came upon pools of water, or thin streams trickling out of the embankment. "They indicate small leaks," said the engineer. "They are not serious, but I suppose we'll have to strip the pipe and repair them some day. Many of these leaks only develop, or show themselves in the fall of the year. We suppose the conduit contracts when the water gets cold and opens small cracks, which close up again when the water gets warm."

After a time we came to sections where the earth had been freshly filled in. It was the place where the leak occurred Friday, a week ago, when many people on the high levees were without water for a time. Evidently it had been a healthy kind of a leak. A great trench running down the side of the hill showed where the water had drained off. "A big hole developed in the bottom of the conduit," explained the engineer. "In such cases there is nothing else for it but to shut the water off for a while. When the break is on the top of the conduit, we reduce the flow of the water and put on a patch without the people knowing that anything is wrong."

After walking back to the team we drove in the other direction along the embankment which marks the course of the pipe line, and came presently to a dozen men constructing an under drain on the edge of the bed of Lake Fitzgerald—the famous dry lake drained by Mr. Murdoch some years ago in order to make the infusorial earth available for agricultural purposes. The workmen were covered with mud, ragged and austere. The engineer inspected their work, held a conference with the foreman, and we went on. When we reached the gatehouse at Lake Latimer, it was dusk. The engineer made a short inspection there, and as darkness fell we started for Loch Lomond.

Pillars of Stone.

Ever long we were on the main road again, and presently I was aware of two stone pillars, erected on the road side. They were unexpected and decorative—symbols, perhaps, of the greatness of the city reaching out into the country for the source of one of the essentials of its health and safety—its very life. A city that erected those pillars out there in the woods evidently has the vision and the dream; the spiritual quality without which its material achievements would be of little value.

We drove between the pillars down to the dam, forming the Robertson reservoir. A fire smoldered in a pile of debris near the water side; the engineer went down, and stirred it to life; the flames leaped high, and a blood-red glare flashed across the waters of the reservoir.

We turned, went on to the caretaker's house at the head of the reservoir, and had supper. Afterwards, we walked on to Loch Lomond, where the engineer wanted to look over an old building belonging to the city, and, returning, stopped at the Loch Lomond Hotel.

The Return.

We walked back to the caretaker's house, and soon were travelling cityward, behind the engineer's horse. The moon was up; its silver radiance lay over the world, giving to the scene roundabout the glamor, the mystery, the beauty of a vision of fairyland.

The road, covered with a layer of light snow, glimmered before us, undulant, and erratic. On either hand the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight; now and then through a sombre gap we glimpsed an expanse of lake, glimmering and beautiful in the play of the moonbeams, sombre and mysterious in the shadows.

All this was great, expectant, mute. The engineer talked of his plans to improve the water service—of his hope of getting some day a buzz-wagon to carry him to and fro over the system. He never disappeared behind a cloud, and, at last, we swung round a curve, and the grey old city of St. John lay before us, draped in dusk, gorgeously decorated with countless lights, arrayed in rows, in clusters, in patterns, fantastic and of barbaric loveliness, in the semblance of a coronet of stars about her brows, strings of golden elaborate bosoms, a zone of glittering gems about her waist, and furbelows of mystical fire about her skirts.

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