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## CURRENT COMMENT

To the June number of L'Alliance Nationale Mr. Ernest Gagnon, learned and accurate Quebec historian, contributes the following curious instance of the perpetuation of a mistake in names. Some years ago, a French traveller, M. le comte de Turenne visited the Canadian Northwest, and in the published account of his travels he extolled the courage of the French Canadians, the first pioneers of those vast and then little known regions. He named several of these venturesome 'coureurs des bois' (wood-rangers), and among others "the celebrated Rene (pronounced in French 'Renay'), who, said M. de Turenne, gave his name to a river and to a fine lake. Shortly after the appearance of Count de Turenne's work Lord Dufferin, when about to start for the Northwest, took care to furnish his meed of praise to the old Canadian 'voyageurs,' and in an official speech he made particular mention of "the celebrated Rene." But what was his dismay, when, in the course of his westward journey, the noble lord reached the shores of Rainy Lake and found out that this was the very same lake which Count de Turenne had miscalled Rene! Of Rene, the wood-ranger, nobody but the noble French Count had ever heard. Meanwhile the Governor General's speech was printed and "the celebrated Rene" was presented to the admiration of Canadians of the nineteenth and subsequent centuries. What was Lord Dufferin to do? He faced the music, pointed out his mistake and was the first to laugh at it. How many of the time-honored fables of so called history have originated in just such misunderstandings on the part of unreflecting travellers.

The French Canadian Voyageurs who discovered Rainy River and Rainy Lake were not far wrong when they gave to those great waterways the names "Riviere et Lac a la Pluie": for in summer, which was the season in which this interesting district was first visited by white men, the spells of rainless days are short, and the rain comes down gently like a familiar friend with little or none of that stormy violence with which the western plains are sporadically and infrequently deluged. But in spring and especially in autumn Rainy River is a misnomer, the weather being generally fine. The abundant, gently falling summer, and more particularly June, rains make the vegetation of the district most luxuriant. The hay is splendid. Clover grows everywhere and fills the air with its sweet fragrance. One wonders why there is not more stock-raising in a country so rich in the choicest herbage. The new settlers do not yet seem to have learned how much less winter-housing of cattle is really needed than used formerly to be thought necessary. In Manitoba, in spite of the winter cold and the biting winds, the open air lee side of a barn or a haystack is quite enough protection for polled Angus cattle. And yet the Rainy River farmers are still kept back by the bugbear of seven months' stabling, although the winter cold is less intense and the winds less biting.

The Canadian Northern Railway has done wonders in the way of opening out the Rainy River district. This line, after skirting the Southern extremity of the Lake of the Woods on the northern border of the State of Minnesota, re-enters Canadian territory by the fine steel bridge between Beaudette on the American side and Rainy River on the Canadian shore, cuts off the points of Rainy River, thus greatly shortening the distance to Fort Frances, after which it crosses Rainy Lake on a three mile succession of five bridges flung from islet to islet, and then heads for Port Arthur. What is not generally known is that that three mile narrowest stretch of Rainy Lake was what prevented the C.P.R. from adopting this route in preference to their present northerly one. But the engineering difficulties which seemed insurmountable to the Canadian Pacific have been successfully overcome by the Canadian

Northern which now offers to travellers from Winnipeg to Port Arthur a distinctly preferable route. The well tilled fields all the way between St. Boniface and Marchand form a pleasing contrast to the few farms that relieve the desolate regions directly east of Winnipeg on the C.P.R. line, while the scenery all along Rainy River and Rainy Lake, and for many miles on approaching Port Arthur, is far more varied than that of the rival line. Although there are treacherous muskogs on both lines the southern line has found them less dangerous and easier to negotiate. Both lines make the run in the same number of hours, about sixteen, and the distance is practically the same; but, because the C.N.R. starts at 4 p.m. from Winnipeg and reaches Port Arthur at 8.30 the next morning, and also perhaps the C.N.R. line is yet less known than the C.P.R., the trains of the former are less crowded, and therefore more comfortable. None of the through immigration to the west takes this route. The service is excellent, officials considerate, trains always strictly on time, cars of the most up-to-date pattern.

We have said that the Canadian Northern Railway has greatly helped to the opening up of the Rainy River district. This it has done by the mere fact of laying down its rails. Otherwise it has done very little. It has made no effort to colonize that region. It has no immigration agents along its line. Nevertheless settlers have taken up land in such quantity within the last two years that new townships have had to be surveyed. From the town of Rainy River to Fort Frances land has been taken up for from fifteen to twenty miles north of the track. Father Meleux has charge of the Catholics in and around the incorporated town of Rainy River, while Father St. Amant has a small diocese to administer. His chief Canadian missions are Pinewood and Stratton, the former chiefly French Canadian with a few Irish Catholic families, the latter all Irish except one French Canadian family. On the Canadian side he has also Barwick and Rapid River. On the American side, in the diocese of Duluth, he has Warroad (at the south-western extremity of Lake of the Woods), Hay Creek, Cedar Bend, Roosevelt, Williams, Zippel, Ripple. The total Catholic population which is about one-fifth of the entire population of this district is 638. The American side of Rainy River, which was formerly an Indian reserve and was opened for settlement only two years ago, is still very sparsely settled; compared to the Canadian side, it is almost a wilderness. Large game, however, such as moose, bear and deer, are still quite common on both sides of the C.N.R. As late as four years ago all the travellers who stopped for refreshments at Warroad were not unfrequently served with moose meat, which was then cheaper than beef. Even now there are plenty of moose and bear both north of the track and on the south side or left bank of Rainy River. And yet, strange to say, there are no professional and very few amateur hunters in this region.

Here is a bear story, for the truth of which Mr. Charles O'Neill, proprietor of the Carman House, Pinewood, vouches, as he saw the fact himself a couple of years ago. Three young men in a batteau or flat bottomed boat, seeing a bear plunge into Rainy River from the bank close to which they were, thought they would have some fun with Bruin by ramming his head with the bow of the boat which they rowed rushing upon him. But the bear just raised one huge paw over the side of the boat and walking into it with astonishing rapidity squatted on his haunches in the bow. The three young men, who had no weapons but their oars, deemed discretion the better part of valor, thanked their stars that Bruin did not attack them, and obligingly rowed him across the river. As soon as the boat reached the other bank the bear trotted off into the woods.

Father Drummond, whom Father St. Amant had invited to lecture and preach, arrived at Pinewood in the evening of June 30, and the next day, Dominion Day, the two priests with the

help of Mr. Thomas Jolicœur, section foreman, his brother Charles and his son Prosper, pumped their way on a handcar to Stratton, nearly seven miles east. The day was very hot and the pumping very hard, at least for the rotund lecturer. The Catholics around Stratton, though not more than fifty all told, are models of enterprise and devotion to their faith. They built last year a neat little church, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception in honor of the Jubilee Year, and already they have it almost paid for. Most of them foregathered for the lecture (some of them driving in seven miles) that evening in the Stratton town hall. In spite of the heat almost all the chairs in the hall were taken, but the lecturer was advised to wait till dusk and did not begin till after nine o'clock. The subject, "The Reasonableness of Belief," seemed to interest the audience very much. Several of those who had come from a great distance, spent the night in Mr. Ward, a prominent Catholic's admirably appointed and most orderly hotel, where the lecturer was a favored guest, and the next morning Father Drummond said Mass and preached in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. There were several confessions and communions, although many had approached the Holy Table ten days before when His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface administered Confirmation. Early in the afternoon Mr. Charles Jolicœur, assisted by Henry and Dan McGee, Pat. Armstrong, John Craigen and Joe Hunt, having thoughtfully rigged up a temporary seat in front of the handcar for Father Drummond, drove him back, this time in luxurious comfort, to Pinewood, doing the seven miles in 24 minutes. To stand on the narrow platform of a crowded handcar, even if one pumps but semi-occasionally, is a vastly different thing from sitting on a comfortable cushion with a rest for one's feet and letting the others pump.

Father Drummond repeated the same lecture last Sunday evening at Pinewood in the church of Our Lady of the Way (B.V.M. a Strata). About one-half of the audience were Protestants, and the total attendance was larger than Father St. Amant expected. Having come on from Stratton by the through train, which passes there at twenty minutes to five in the morning, Father St. Amant sang High Mass and preached. The best hotel in Pinewood is kept by another Catholic, Mr. Charles O'Neill, who treated the Fathers most hospitably. Curiously enough, the three contiguous railway sections of Pinewood, Stratton and Barwick are under three French Canadian foremen, who are also brothers-in-law, Messrs. Asselin Jolicœur and Leblanc.

Father St. Amant is a born missionary. Tall, healthy and strong, he proves, on close acquaintance, bigger and stronger than he seems. He delights in manual labor, especially carpentry, and is considered the best canoe man in the Rainy River valley. When he visits his missions on the American side of the river his skill in steering a Pétaborough canoe down the rapids of the Minnesota rivers is often severely tested. Having had a thorough seminary training in the cultured city of Quebec, he knows how to choose the very best books for his position, and his library is surprisingly select and satisfying. His practical knowledge of music and plain chant saves him from the tender mercies of country choirs and enables him to train good singers. He has the all-embracing charity of the true Apostle. Before coming to Pinewood five years ago, he evangelized the Indians around Fort Frances and he still preserves a special fondness for the untutored and childlike redskin, whose natural virtues contrast favorably with the acquired vices of those self-asserting, shallow white blatherskites who abound in all new settlements. But even with these poor victims of silly pride Father St. Amant is ever gentle and patient, prudent in all his dealings with the various races around him, never allowing racial feelings to bias his cool judgment, and yet firm as a rock where duty points the only right course. His only fixed residence is at Pinewood, but, as he has so many missions to visit, he

is seldom at home for any length of time, and so he prefers to do his own cooking and general housekeeping. His own needs are few, for he is healthily abstemious; but he knows how to receive his clerical friends with true hospitality. He is still in the early prime of manhood, being just five and thirty, and might naturally look forward to some more comfortable berth, but, with the real missionary spirit, he is quite willing to spend his whole life amid the hardships of this active apostleship. It is not himself that he seeks but the glory of God through the salvation of souls.

## Clerical News

Abbot Gasquet, O.S.B., has been re-elected Abbot-President at the quadrennial Benedictine Chapter held at Ampleforth. The Rev. John Clement Fowler, O.S.B., St. Osburg's, Coventry, has been appointed Prior of Belmont Minster, Hereford, in succession to Prior Cummins.

Monsignor Lualdi, Archbishop of Palermo, the Patriarch of Venice, and an Argentine Bishop are spoken of as likely to be created Cardinals at the next Consistory.

At their Majesties' Garden party, given at Windsor Castle, Father Bernard Vaughan appeared to be quite as much at home and at his ease as in the East End or among his Westminster costers.

The Holy Father on Monday June 12, received in private audience Mgr. Orth, Archbishop of Vancouver, who presented a report on his diocese. His Holiness showed great interest in the progress of British Columbia.

The sudden death at Munich of the distinguished Dominican, Father Denifle, who was to come to Cambridge with Father Ehrle to receive the Doctorate "honoris causa," has given a painful shock to his many friends.

Rev. Father Ehrle, S.J., Prefect of the Vatican Library, was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor in Letters by the University of Cambridge, on June 14.

Rev. Father Alexander Giroux, pastor of La Broquerie, came to town on Wednesday to present collective protests against a liquor license in his parish. Backed by four-fifths of his parishioners he has hitherto succeeded in staving off the curse of a licensed hotel in La Broquerie.

Rev. Armand Chossegras, S.J., left on Wednesday for Manteno, Ill., where he will take the place of the Rev. Father Bourdeau, who is going on a European trip.

Three ecclesiastics destined for this diocese, Rev. Messrs. Gerritsma, Janssen and Menage, who spent the last year at the Montreal Grand Seminary, arrived here on Tuesday. The last named is a Breton from Ile-et-Vilaine, the two others are Hollanders; these two will be ordained subdeacons next Sunday at St. Jean Baptiste, deacons on the following Thursday and priests the following Sunday at St. Boniface cathedral.

Rev. Adonias Sabourin, B.A. (Man. Univ.), will be raised to the priesthood next Sunday at St. Jean Baptiste, Man.

Rev. Father Garaix, S.J., leaves next Monday for Argyle, Minn., where he will preach a retreat to the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The accommodation offered in the industrial and live stock classes of the Winnipeg Industrial Fair will again be ample, being as large and extensive as was the case with the Dominion Exhibition of last year. There is a total floor space of 283,660 square feet of which 135,000 are devoted to industrial displays and 148,650 to live stock and poultry. There is accommodation for 300 pigs, 400 sheep, 400 horses and 600 cattle, and in addition there is the great speed stable 600 feet long.

## Persons and Facts.

Although Alfonso of Spain is a king it must not be forgotten that he is still a boy. "Let the following anecdote, which has been communicated to us privately," says the Newcastle Daily Chronicle, "and has not hitherto been in print, testify. One of his Majesty's sisters received part of her education at the Convent of the Assumption in Paris, and in letters written home to her brother she was eloquent in praise of certain tarts baked by the lay nuns, and considered quite a specialty of the Convent. During his stay in the French capital King Alfonso did not forget what his sister had mentioned about the tarts and sent word to the Convent that he would like to taste some. They were immediately baked and forwarded hot out of the oven to his Majesty, who devoured them with relish, and acknowledged his satisfaction by a letter of thanks and a handsome donation. The Convent of the Assumption has up to the present escaped the application of the Congregational laws, and has amongst its pupils several English girls. The gentleman to whom we are indebted for the little story we have related has two nieces there, and it is they who have supplied the information."

Miss Eva Mylott, a Catholic girl born in Australia and educated in the Convent of the Immaculate Conception at Balmain, New South Wales, is now singing in the best concerts in London and the provinces, winning great fame as a contralto singer. On leaving Australia, where her reputation is very high, she was presented with a cheque for £325, the proceeds of the largest farewell concert held since the departure for England of Miss Ada Crossby about eleven years ago.

After thoroughly sifting the evidence as to whether or not John Mitchel, "the unchangeable Irish rebel," died a Catholic, the "Glasgow Observer" concludes that it is not proved that he did, that it is possible and even probable. "The most significant fact," says our Scotch contemporary, "is that testified to by Mrs. McMenamie" (whose mother was employed in the house in which Mitchel died) "that Mitchel declined to see the Unitarian minister, Mr. Crozier, and allowed the priest to remain so long in his room on the day he died. To this has to be added the fact that Mitchel's two daughters are nuns, which may or may not have some influence on the verdict."

Already there is a notable Catholic activity among the Indian natives of Labrador. Nine Assumptionist priests and 27 Sisters of Charity two years ago driven out of France have founded schools on the island, and are making much progress in teaching.

The Pope has sent an autograph letter to the Czar thanking him for the Imperial ukase granting freedom of religion and for inviting the Catholic Bishop's co-operation in the direction of concessions and reforms in the Church. The Pope concludes with a hope that a new era of peace and tranquility is dawning for the Catholic Church in Russia.

It is announced that Lady Butt and her daughter, the Princess Margaret Ruspoli, are about to become Catholics. Lady Butt is the widow of the late Sir Charles Butt, President of the English Probate and Admiralty Division. Sir Charles was a Protestant, but his brother became a convert to Catholicism, and was the late Dr. Butt, the lamented Bishop of Southwark.

The people of Western Canada have now come to recognize the Winnipeg Industrial as an occasion for their annual outing, knowing that in the great growth of the Fair there is always much that is entirely new and a great deal that is vastly improved, and the present year will demonstrate these facts to a greater degree than in years past, because of the new features and new attractions that have never before presented.