

The Saint John Monitor.

Vol. XIV.

Saint John, N. B., Dec. 21, 1912.

No. 3

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The Acadian Testimonial At Memramcook

Pontifical High Mass—Address and Purse Presented to Bishop LeBlanc—His Lordship's Reply—Large Gathering of Priests and Laymen.

ST. JOSEPH, N. B., Dec. 17.—There was a large gathering of Acadians from all parts of the country at St. Joseph's College to-day at the presentation of the Acadian testimonial to the Right Rev. E. A. LeBlanc, Bishop of St. John.

After the celebration of Pontifical High Mass, the following address, read by His Honor Mr. Justice Landry, and accompanied by a well-filled purse, was read:

To the Right Reverend E. A. LeBlanc, Bishop of St. John:

My Lord,—The Holy Scriptures relate that for centuries the chosen people of God awaited the Messiah, and when the prophecies were at last fulfilled there was great joy in Israel. Without wishing to push the analogy further, we can say that during long years the Acadian people desired to see one of their children in the hierarchy of the Catholic and Roman Church.

Permit, Your Lordship, all the Acadians of America to lay at your feet their homage and felicitation, as well as the expression of their joy and delight on the occasion of this first elevation of one of their own to the sublime dignity of the Episcopate. Some thought, no doubt in good faith, that this desire to have Acadian Bishops interested but a small number and an isolated group; the results have answered this. We wish no other proof than what Your Lordship wrote a priest shortly after your nomination, viz., "I never appreciated the intensity of the desire to have an Acadian Bishop. There were needed the events of the last few days to make me understand it. The numerous letters which I received from all parts of Canada abundantly prove it."

There is another proof, my Lord, which we cannot pass over in silence, viz., the consoling fact that from the most distant hamlets of Cape Breton to the confines of Louisiana, from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific slopes, have come to us from Acadians dispersed all over expressions of the happiness, the felicitations, and filial affection which we offer you to-day.

Casting a retrospective glance over certain epochs of our history, we find that no people in the world have suffered more to preserve its faith and remain faithful to the church than the Acadian people. That is why, in the light of history, we are to-day sur-named "the martyred people." Irish and Poles, our brothers in faith and persecution, have also had much to endure, and a great number were obliged to leave their country to escape persecution, but none of those peoples were violently wrenched from their friends and scattered to the four corners of the world, as was the Acadian people because it wished to remain Catholic and French.

To-day, we proclaim with delight that God has blessed our misfortunes, for we can truly say that despite persecution and exile, no people has had less defection from the faith than that of which you are the distinguished son. Practically, we have all remained Catholics. Our faith is a living faith, and has preserved its primitive qualities, even according to the admissions of those who have studied our religious physiognomy. For over three centuries our fidelity to the church and our filial attachment to the Holy See has not suffered any diminution. Let us forever bless God.

We dare to believe that it is to console us for the sufferings of our ancestors, the pioneers of faith and civilization in North America, that God and Mary, our patroness, have heard the prayers which every day ascended to heaven from Acadian hamlets asking to be admitted on a footing of equality with other races into the Episcopate. We are certain that it is in this aspect of our history which touched the paternal heart of the immortal Pius X., to whom we are directly indebted for the nomination of our first Acadian Bishop. Glory and love to the great Pope who to-day governs the church; we vow to him eternal gratitude. This act of paternal goodness will draw more

closely to him the hearts of his Acadian children; and our fidelity to the church and to the Holy See will be but more and more strengthened. Judging by the manifestations of warm felicitations which we have received from the whole of the North American continent, and by the intense joy which your elevation to the Episcopal See of St. John has awakened in all Acadian hearts, we have cherished the illusion that the whole of Acadia was your diocese; and so this universal joy has carried the conviction to our souls that your real diocesans must be considered happy to have you for their chief pastor.

How many things should we not have to say to you, my Lord. But yesterday we were simply a little group, humble, poor, resourceless, without influence in either church or state. This little group nevertheless has manifested its special character of vitality in its regular development, due to the conservation of our ancestral morals. It has found in its profound faith that strength of soul which consoles, elevates and fortifies. One of the fruits of this development was the foundation of the work of the Society of the Assumption by a few true patriots in the United States, who maintain in the classical courses of our Catholic colleges forty Acadian pupils. All the efforts of Acadian parents of the three provinces united do not do more to-day for the higher education of our children than the splendid working of these scholarships.

If then, my Lord, this little group, without resources, without influence, having for its ideal only its love for country, has been able to organize such a work for the good of education among us, cannot we inaugurate an era of prodigious prosperity under the protection of a devoted pastor of one of the most beautiful and richest dioceses of the Maritime Provinces, especially when this pastor is filled with the spirit of love and sympathy for his compatriots. St. Joseph's College, the hope of our race, your college now, my Lord, came at a providential moment to spread the beneficent and regenerating work of higher education in Acadia, and already a pleiad of valiant and zealous men have issued from this blessed institution and are laboring in the fields of action where God has called them for the development and advancement of their fellow-citizens. St. Joseph's College counts upon your sympathy for the continuation of its sublime work. Our primary schools will further progress, by the good counsels which you can impart to parents and by the encouragement which you can give to teachers. Under your inspiration our farmers will devote more time to the cultivation of the soil upon which they have been born, knowing that this very soil was the cradle and the tomb of their ancestors. Our convents, favored and patronized by Your Lordship, will redouble their efforts in works of devotion, charity and sacrifice. In a word, under your pastoral care, our population will take a marvellous flight towards the highest peaks of material progress, and for the expansion of Christian faith in their souls.

There is one institution to which we specially wish to direct your attention—that is the splendid building recently erected at Shediac, which has already received within its walls a goodly number of the unfortunate; those whom financial distress has left in indigence find succor and assistance in this house of God directed and maintained by charity. We recommend this work to your good will.

Permit us to assure Your Lordship that you can count upon our ardent patriotism, upon our profound faith and upon our filial submission, to second all your efforts in the discharge of your ministry; that you can count upon our entire approbation for whatever your paternal heart will do for the members of your flock of another language. You can count upon our joy even for whatever will contribute to increase their prestige and their influence. Under your wise direction

we desire to march hand in hand with them for the well being of the church. They have won our admiration and our gratitude by the grand demonstration and magnificent reception which they gave Your Lordship on your entry to your Episcopal city.

We will pray especially to the Star of the Sea, asking her to guide your steps in the way of justice and of charity towards all the national groups of the beautiful diocese confided to your care, in order that peace and harmony may reign among us, and that we may no longer have but one heart and soul. Accept then, my Lord, our most respectful homage, our most sincere felicitations and our most ardent good wishes. Our prayers each day will ascend, earnest and fervent, to the throne of God and Mary, that the years of your Episcopate may be happy, long and fruitful.

In conclusion, we respectfully ask Your Lordship to be pleased to accept the accompanying purse, the result of the modest offerings of thousands of Acadians—men, women and children—as well of the Maritime Provinces as of the rest of Canada and the United States. It is the obole of the poor, it is also the obole of love towards Your Lordship and of gratitude towards Pope Pius X., who has been graciously pleased to recompense our long fidelity to the church by giving us to-day for the first time in the annals of our history a great joy, of assisting at a fete whose end and object is to honor the first child of Acadia admitted to the sublime dignity of the Episcopate.

AD MULTOS ANNOS.

Signed on behalf of the Acadians.

P. A. LANDRY,

Judge of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick.

His Lordship made an appropriate reply.

Mgr. Richard, of Rogersville, preached the sermon at the Pontifical Mass celebrated by His Lordship.

DORCHESTER, N. B., Dec. 18.—

Notwithstanding the adverse weather conditions the ceremonies in connection with the reception of His Lordship Bishop LeBlanc were carried out with becoming effect. On the arrival of the Bishop and his train at College Bridge on Monday, he was met by Rev. B. LeCavaller, President of St. Joseph's University, under the escort of a bodyguard, bearing lighted torches. The procession proceeded to the college. In the evening the formal reception was held in the Lefebvre Memorial Hall, a literary programme being rendered in French and English. Addresses were delivered by Rev. Father LeCavaller, on behalf of the members of the faculty, and by Messrs. Allen and Landry on behalf of the student body. In reply, His Lordship feelingly thanked all present for their heartfelt reception tendered him. Speaking to the students, he counselled them in the duties incumbent upon them while students and their obligations hereafter in their relations to church and state.

Yesterday solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated in St. Thomas's church. Monsignor Richard delivered an eloquent address on the Acadian people, their trials and triumphs. Following the address of Monsignor Richard, Hon. Judge Landry, representing the people, read an address of welcome, at the conclusion of which His Lordship was presented with a monetary testimonial.

His Lordship, leaving the throne, approached the altar rail, his manner bearing evidence of the deep feelings agitating him, and said: Words cannot express the feelings dominating me. I thank you sincerely for the marks of profound respect and homage manifested in the eloquent addresses and testimonial offered me. I have but to exhort you always to continue as you have in the past, ever faithful and devoted children. We have but to turn to the history of the past and regard the education and fortitude of our ancestors when trials and distress weighed heavily upon them to know of what our people are capable. Our ancestors were martyrs, because

(Continued on Page Four.)