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CURRENT COMMENT

"Le Canada", a Liberal Montreal organ, has been publishing a series of articles on the Northwest Schools which are very timely at this juncture, when the enemies of Catholic liberty are firing off their stock ammunition of big thumping lies. Our Montreal contemporary quotes the following words of the late Hon. George Brown during the parliamentary discussion about the organization of the Northwest Territories: "It has been said that the clause (on Separate Schools) was inserted for the protection of the Protestants against the Catholics, these latter being the most numerous. But for my part, speaking for the Protestants and in their name, I am in a position to say that they do not need this protection." Commenting on this passage, "Le Canada" writes: "The Hon. George Brown was right. Wherever Catholics have been in a majority, they have been liberal enough to allow Protestants to bring up their children in the religious atmosphere which they prefer. In 1875, in spite of the deplorable example of New Brunswick, it was still possible to believe that a Protestant majority would be liberal enough not to impose on Catholics an educational system repugnant to their conscience. Since that date we have had the disastrous Manitoba law of 1890; we have had violent campaigns against separate schools in Ontario. Whoever is honest will agree with us that events have justified the contention of the Hon. George Brown that Protestants need no protection against possible encroachments of Catholics; Catholics, on the contrary, need the most explicit, the most clearly defined, the most efficacious protection against the possible encroachments of a Protestant majority." This is exceedingly well put. Protestants have nothing to fear from a Protestant majority; Catholics have everything to fear from a Protestant majority. In political matters Protestantism is essentially aggressive and tyrannical; Catholicism is essentially peaceful and tolerant.

We fully endorse "Le Canada" saying: "We deeply regret having to write in this way, but really our adversaries seem to delight in forcing us to do so. The constitutional act of 1867 guarantees separate schools; without that guarantee Confederation would not have been accepted by the Province of Quebec. Our fellow countrymen who emigrated to the Northwest and who were the first to utilize its incalculable resources, went thither in the belief that they were under the jurisdiction of the constitutional law of 1867. Their Protestant neighbors enjoy all the rights guaranteed to them by this law; through what subtlety of reasoning can people hope to prove that the Catholics of the Northwest have not the same rights as the Protestants? that they have not, as the others have, the right to claim all the protection which the British North America Act of 1867 grants them?"

"To stigmatize as 'privileges' the rights which Catholics claim is strangely to distort the meaning of words. Catholics claim no privilege; having the proud consciousness that where they are the majority, they have always respected the equal rights of others, they claim equal rights where they are the minority." Thus does our Montreal contemporary fling back into the teeth of our enemies their false shibboleth of "equal rights". What they mean by "equal rights" is the right to teach Catholic children all the errors of Protestantism.

"Le Canada" also points out that, left to themselves, the masses of our separate brethren would not interfere with Catholics; but, in moments of political excitement, they are influenced by clerical and lay firebrands who kindle anew that flame of unreasoning passion and mendacity which burst forth at the time of the so-called

Reformation and which the average decent Protestant of our day strives to forget. Catholics "are aware", says "Le Canada", "that the prejudices whence arises opposition to separate schools are almost extinct in the great majority of their Protestant fellow citizens, who, if left to their better instincts, would never think of doing violence to the consciences of others. Unfortunately experience is there to prove that, when swayed by politicians, they may be driven to acts of oppression which they themselves afterwards regret."

The following justly indignant letter appeared in last Monday's Free Press.

A PROTEST.

To the Editor of the Free Press.

Sir,—I noticed a cartoon in the Toronto World the other day conveying the idea that a settler going into the Northwest after the passage of the pending bill, will have to pay taxes to separate schools. The World should discipline its cartoonist. At no time in the Northwest or in Manitoba, or in any part of Canada, was a Protestant compelled to pay taxes to the support of separate schools. The only people compelled to pay taxes to the support of schools to which they do not send their children are the Roman Catholics. Is it not time that this misrepresentation and abuse of Roman Catholics should cease? Or are we to put up with it to the end of time?

H. T. McPHILLIPS.
St. Paul, March 1.

Accustomed, as we are, to a daily re-hash of misrepresentations and abuse so voluminous that a large corps of writers would be needed to nail each individual lie, we are more patient, though not less indignant, than Mr. McPhillips. Besides, it is a solid comfort for us, as it must be to him, that, although very probably the defamers of truth will keep up their barking and yelping till the end of time, the curs will not be heard in the everlasting home which every true Catholic will ultimately reach.

We gladly reproduce from the Guelph (Ont.) "Evening Mercury" of the 1st inst., the following item with the Mercury's headings. Equally refreshing are Mr. Brock's fairmindedness and the Guelph paper's approval thereof.

THE PROPOSAL IS FAIR.

A Prominent Winnipeg Conservative on Northwest Schools.

Mr. J. H. Brock, Winnipeg, manager, of the Great West Life Insurance Company, was asked by the Globe correspondent for his opinion as to the proposal to embody the present Territorial school law in the acts establishing the new Provinces.

As this gentleman is one of the most influential Conservatives in Manitoba and a brother of Dr. Brock, of Guelph, his views are of especial interest. Mr. Brock spoke as follows:—

"I am in favor of settling the school question on the basis of the terms accorded to the Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec at the time of confederation. In my opinion the system at present in force in the Territories is a just and equitable one, and the best thing to be done is to embody the present legislation in the acts incorporating the new Provinces, so as to avert future trouble and safeguard the rights of the minorities, whether Catholic or Protestant. These rights have been in force for thirty years, and the wisest thing to be done is to secure them for the future. I think we Protestants should act fairly towards Roman Catholics and safeguard their prejudices, especially when our privileges are also safeguarded.

"To go further in this matter, I cannot refrain from referring to the present position of Roman Catholics in Manitoba, where they are forced to pay taxes to the public schools, which many of them do not use, and then they have to go down into their pockets a second time in order to maintain their own educational establishments. I call this an outrage,

and I say that the injustice should not be duplicated in Saskatchewan and Alberta."

Mr. J. H. Brock no doubt voices the feelings of many other fairminded Winnipeg conservatives occupying as prominent positions as his own; but somehow the Telegram interviewer never strikes any respectable personages of that caliber; all the people he pumps are hidebound fanatics.

One of the first Protestants to come out flat-footed in favor of Sir Wilfrid's school clause was Mr. Hugh Guthrie, M.P., for South Wellington, whose remarks are reported in "The Globe" as follows:

Mr. Hugh Guthrie—On the motion to adjourn, on which several members have spoken, some of whom have said that they are unalterably opposed to clause sixteen of the bill creating two new Provinces in the Northwest Territories, I would say on my own behalf, speaking for myself only, that I am unalterably in favor of that clause sixteen and the two bills shortly to come up for a second reading. (Ministerial applause and a voice—"Take that.") So far as I have been able to gather, the only point urged today is that made by the hon. member for North Toronto, who says that the bills are hurried ones. Surely he does not mean that these are new bills. I remember last session hearing this matter discussed, if not in the House, at all events around the House, likewise the session before that. They are, I submit, two of the best considered bills that have ever been brought forward, and, although they may not have been as fully discussed with some members of the Government as they might have been, still I venture to say that during the past five or ten years no question has received greater consideration. If I understand Todd and May's laws and usages of Parliament, I believe I am correct in saying that it is the Prime Minister who should introduce measures of the kind we are now discussing, and if any of the members of his Cabinet are not in accord with him they have one duty to perform, and that is to resign. If the ex-Minister of the Interior found he could not support the Government in this matter he has taken the proper course; but as I understand the question, so far as it is now gone, there is a distinct desire on the part of hon. members opposite, evinced both in their speeches and their newspapers, to create some inflammatory condition in this country which there is nothing in the bills introduced to warrant.

Some hon. members—What about The Globe?
Mr. Guthrie—I have read the editorials in The Globe, in which that newspaper takes issue with the Government regarding the educational policy laid down in the bills presented to this House. I am sorry that The Globe cannot see as the Government do on this question, but The Globe is only one newspaper, and we are legislating for the whole Dominion (Hear, hear.) If the Globe cannot see eye to eye with us that is no reason whatever why we should turn back from what we believe to be our duty. The majority of the members of this House, I am convinced, are of the opinion that the measure submitted to us is but right and just, and in that belief I think we should go forward, notwithstanding The Toronto Globe and the organ of the hon. member for South York, and those other organs which are criticizing these bills very adversely at the present time. (Ministerial applause.)

In the hurry of getting to press last week our final remark on Dr. Bryce's reply to Father McCarthy (page 8) was misprinted: "talked 'not' about loyalty." On the contrary he talked a great deal thereon; but what he said was, as we wrote it, 'rot'.

Our readers will, we feel sure, share with us the pleasure we feel at the announcement, fully explained in another

column, that the long-wished-for Catholic Encyclopedia is within sight. The first of the fifteen projected volumes will appear in one year from now, and the entire work will be finished in five years from the appearance of the first volume, that is to say, in 1911. We, who have, more than once in these pages, insisted on the urgent need of such a work, are particularly pleased that it is at length really and truly begun. The board of editors, embodying, as it does, the best Catholic scholarship, represents the two most learned bodies in America: the Jesuits and the Catholic University at Washington. The former, backed by thirty of the best colleges in this northern hemisphere, are represented directly by Father John J. Wynne, S.J., and indirectly by Dr. Herbermann and Dr. Conde B. Pallen, both pupils of the Society of Jesus. The Catholic University of America is excellently represented by Rev. Dr. Thomas Joseph Shahan, Professor of Church History, and by Dr. Edward Aloysius Pace, Professor of Philosophy. All these men are distinguished scholars. As early as thirty years ago Dr. Herbermann was considered one of the best classicists in America. Dr. Pallen has an established reputation as a journalist, essayist and poet. Father Wynne, is the man who, as editor of "The Messenger," by his able articles, forced three popular encyclopedias to revise and correct all their articles on Catholic questions. Doctors Shahan and Pace are already well known as learned writers.

The scope of this welcome encyclopedia is sketched in the special article sent out by the Directors and reproduced elsewhere in this issue. The list of subjects therein given is evidently not exhaustive, and yet everything under the sun can be correlated to one of these headings. We sincerely trust that the Catholic cyclopaedia will take in all the subjects commonly to be found in other cyclopedias, so that the possessor of the new work will not need to consult other cyclopedias at all. For instance, biographies of all celebrated men of the past and present, even if they have nothing to do with Catholicism, should be a special feature. Thus one will not have to turn to a non-Catholic cyclopaedia to learn all that is worth knowing about Plato, Aristotle and Confucius.

At a moment like this, when the barbarian hordes are riding the Protestant horse against separate schools and, by way of consequence, against everything Catholic, it seems hardly necessary to urge again the crying need of a Catholic cyclopaedia, wherein every Catholic writer will find ready to his hand all the facts of each case. But we deem it wise to clinch the argument by a few quotations from Dr. Pallen's masterly review, in the March Messenger, of encyclopedic publications from the earliest times. One curious fact, not generally known, and which the writer clearly proves, is that the "Encyclopedie" of D'Alembert and Diderot, which did so much harm in the eighteenth century, was originally conceived as a mere translation of the "Encyclopedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences" of Ephraim Chambers, an avowed freethinker, an Englishman who died in 1740 and is not to be confounded with the famous Scotch brothers, William and Robert Chambers, publishers of the modern "Chambers' Cyclopaedia", one of the least objectionable of the cyclopedias published in the British Isles. "The conspiracy of the French Encyclopaedists of the eighteenth century succeeded only too well," writes Dr. Pallen. "Through them originally and secondarily through the inheritance they left to their encyclopaedic posterity, the popular mind has been profoundly poisoned against Catholic truth and Catholic history. The infection of their hatred against the Catholic Church has spread like a leprosy among non-Catholic peoples. No better weapon could have been forged for their purpose than an encyclopaedia, which, under the disguise

of a reference work of popular in- and a misrepresentation and calumny against the Church. In consequence, up to a very recent day, popular encyclopaedias amongst English-speaking peoples have been rather sources of perversion than authentic springs of information to the popular mind in their treatment of Catholic subjects."

Then, after relating how, within the past few years, a change for the better has taken place, how "the makers of popular encyclopaedias, at least in America, have come to realize that the ancient policy of ignoring, suppressing or perverting the facts and truths of the Catholic faith is not only an unfair and partisan procedure, but entirely out of place in an age when the former acerbities of polemics have softened down... and the ignorance of the past has yielded to the fuller knowledge of a broadening and more judicious method of historical research," Dr. Pallen chronicles the fact, mentioned by us above, that, "under the spur of an effective protest from the Catholics of this country, three popular encyclopaedias in the process of manufacture entered recently upon a Catholic revision of their matter." But of course this revision will scarcely affect the distinctively Protestant articles. For example, none but a Catholic cyclopaedia would dare to condense into a biography of Luther the revelations of recent research as to his obscenity, cruelty and mendacity, of which the Rev. Charles Starbuck has so often given us glimpses in the Sacred Heart Review. Besides, "there still remains a great desideratum for English-speaking Catholics, and that is an encyclopaedia of their own, which shall present their religion in all its fulness and truth in a great work of reference in their native language... To say that such a work is a need is to utter a recognized truism. That it is woefully needed amongst English-speaking Catholics we have all appreciated these many years. But more than this, it is as much, if not more, needed amongst non-Catholics of the English-speaking world. When we stop to consider upon what sort of pabulum the non-Catholic mind amongst us has been fed for generations, in regard to all things Catholic, we should neither be surprised nor indignant at the result. English literature from the time of the Reformation has been Protestant; English history, as well as other history written by English hands, has been conceived and written in the spirit of, and in the defence of, Protestantism. It has in consequence done scant justice to Catholics and Catholic subjects. That literature and that history English-speaking peoples the world over have inherited, and with them the deep and narrow prejudices that naturally spring from such partisan mental habitudes. It was natural then for encyclopaedias in the English tongue to reflect, propagate and perpetuate a view radically hostile to the Catholic religion. The result has been a travesty of Catholicity in the popular imagination... a confused picture of fantastic monstrosities upon a void background."

Dr. Pallen adds another consideration of great moment in favor of a Catholic cyclopaedia. "To construct a work of this character is to build a monument to the Faith. To set forth all that the Catholic Church is in her organization, constitution, teachings and history is a labor of vast and far-reaching results. Its effects upon the public mind would be inestimable both in the Catholic and the non-Catholic world. It would be to put the Church in all her greatness and grandeur before the eyes of a people, who heretofore have known her only in part or perhaps in travesty. Her history is the history of modern civilization; her teaching is the fulness of Christianity. Art, science and education come under her influence and inspiration from the very beginning. She has been the one great spiritual influence throughout the ages from