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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1906.

Calendar for Next Week.

- 25—Quinquagesima Sunday.
26—Monday—St. Margaret of Carthage,
Penitent.
27—Shrove Tuesday—Votive office of
the Holy Angels.
28—Ash Wednesday—Beginning of the
Lenten Fast.
MARCH.
1—Thursday—Votive office of the
Blessed Sacrament.
2—Friday—The Crown of Thorns.
3—Saturday—Votive office of the Im-
maculate Conception.

DR. BRYCE'S CHARGE AGAINST FATHER LESTANC—A RE- BUTTAL

The following letter with its affidavits settles the question of Dr. Bryce's veracity for ever and aye. The irrepressible Doctor's Illustrated History of Winnipeg has long since been laughed out of existence. But its ridiculous side is not its most objectionable feature. Wherever the Catholic religion or the French element is dragged in, that history is, in most cases, a conspiracy against the truth. Like the "Canadian party" which, in the late sixties, conspired against the peace and harmony of this country, Dr. Bryce, their great apologist, ruthlessly suppresses the truth and shamelessly suggests falsehood whenever it suits him. To the Editor of the Free Press.

Sir,—In a history of Winnipeg by the Rev. Dr. George Bryce, which was published in your paper, the following charge is made against the Rev. Father Lestanc, viz.: "That the Rev. Father Lestanc, and William O'Donohue fled to the United States on the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, and spent the winter ('70 and '71) at Pembina planning mischief." When this charge appeared in your papers, the Rev. Father McCarthy, who resided in the same house with Father Lestanc before the arrival of the troops, at the time of their arrival, and after their arrival, wrote you a letter denying the statement made by the learned historian. In a subsequent letter Father McCarthy wrote again in which he gave a detailed statement from Father Lestanc showing that instead of spending the winter ('70 and '71) at Pembina, he spent it at Wood Mountain, in the Northwest Territories of Canada. I also wrote the reverend doctor that I was a member of No. 1 Company of the First Ontario Rifles. That that company was detached for duty on the frontier and wintered at North Pembina. That there was no resident priest in Pembina during that winter, neither did Father Lestanc pay a temporary visit to Pembina during that winter.

Notwithstanding these positive statements from Father Lestanc and McCarthy and myself, the Rev. Dr. Bryce never withdrew his slander against Father Lestanc. To make his offending doubly offensive he said in the closing chapter of his history:

"The attempt to disprove the complicity of Father Lestanc in the first Riel rebellion absolutely failed, resolving itself on the trivial point of whether or not Pere Lestanc was seen with the Fenian O'Donohue at Pembina after the rebellion. There is satisfactory evidence for the companionship stated, but the point does not materially affect the question at issue." Three creditable witnesses positively stated that the Rev. Dr. Bryce uttered a falsehood when he made the charge. He has never produced the slightest evidence to show on what ground he made his charge. If he has any evidence the public have a right to know what it is. Yet this historian reiterates his charge, but declines to produce his witnesses. It is an easy task to bear false witness

against your neighbor, to destroy his character by charging him with crime, and when confronted with his wickedness to merely shrug your shoulders and say, "There is satisfactory evidence for the companionship stated, but the point does not materially affect the question at issue." Was the Rev. Dr. Bryce writing history or was he simply gossiping? That is the question. He says he was writing history. We accept his word for it. In that history he positively asserts that Father Lestanc fled the country on the arrival of the troops in company with a notorious rebel, and remained in a foreign country all winter "planning mischief." This statement was made for the malicious purpose of making the public believe that Father Lestanc was a rebel refugee from justice. Now here is a positive statement made in the name of history. Is it true or false history? The public have a right to know. If it is true then Father Lestanc and his friends, Father McCarthy and myself, are liars. If it is false then the Rev. Dr. Bryce must bear the odium of not only stating a deliberate falsehood, but stubbornly refusing to withdraw it, or give the historical evidence on which he founded his slander.

I enclose you herewith the sworn declarations of Father Lestanc, Father McCarthy and myself, dealing with this historical (?) statement of Dr. Bryce. Let the public know the truth, even though the Rev. Dr. Bryce stands before them branded as "a trifler with the character of a brother clergyman, and that at the expense of truth and honor." Let him take comfort in the fact that he is not the only historian who has earned that unenviable reputation. Inasmuch as the "Free Press" was the medium through which this slanderous falsehood has been given to the public, it is to be hoped that you will be fair enough to publish these denials and the following affidavits which accompany them.

J. F. TENNANT.

Gretna, Feb. 13.

Dominion of Canada, Province of Alberta. To wit:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. Bryce, in his "History of Winnipeg," wherein he charges me as follows: "That the Rev. Father Lestanc and William O'Donohue fled to the United States on the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, and spent the winter ('70 and '71) at Pembina planning mischief."

I, Jean Marie Lestanc, priest, of the City of Calgary, in the Province of Alberta, do solemnly declare that:

1. I am the "Father Lestanc" referred to in the above quoted statement taken from the history written by the aforesaid Dr. Bryce.

2. That the above quoted statement, so far as it refers to me, is absolutely untrue.

3. I did not go to the United States after the arrival of the troops, but left for Qu'Appelle mission. Bishop Tache desired me to go to that mission, as it was afflicted with smallpox; in fact, the scourge spread its ravages along the Saskatchewan, over the prairies and threatened the Red river. I started on horseback in the beginning of September, 1870, for Qu'Appelle. When I got to Portage la Prairie I found a poor half-breed dying of smallpox on the bank of Little Rat river, entirely abandoned. His name was Pierre Pepin. I attended to his wants and prepared him for death, which came a few minutes afterwards. As it was a dark night I had to wait till morning to bury him. Next day I got some half-breeds to dig a grave. For fear of these married men catching the disease, I reserved for myself the task of laying out the body and performing the burial. Before leaving the grave I felt I had caught the disease; the poor deceased had nothing to leave me but his disease. But I had to continue my voyage to Qu'Appelle, over 200 miles, in a Red river cart, slow and jolting, and I in an agony of fever all the way. At last I got there, and, heated by a good fire, the smallpox came out, my face and hands covered with scabs. By precautionary measures, no one caught the disease, which left me shortly afterwards. After a few days, before being quite convalescent, a sick call came from Wood Mountain, over 100 miles south of Qu'Appelle. I was the only available priest, and I started out with my half-breed guide, in a cold season and terrible roads, only to find my sick man already dead. However, as there were then several families who had not had a priest for several years, I yielded to their earnest supplications, and decided to pass the winter with them. It was then at Wood Mountain I passed the winter of '70 and '71, in instructing the ignorant and curing and caring for the sick of soul and body.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true, and knowing that it is of the same force

and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence act, 1893.

J. M. LESTANC, O.M.I.

Declared before me at the City of Calgary, in the Province of Alberta, this 3rd day of February, A.D. 1906,

W. J. COSTELLO,

J.P. in and for Alberta, Canada,

(Copy)

Dominion of Canada, province of Manitoba. To wit:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. George Bryce and the Rev. Jean Marie Lestanc: I, Joseph Francis Tennant, immigration agent of the village of Gretna in the province of Manitoba, do solemnly declare that (1) I was a member of No. 1 company of the 1st Ontario rifles of the Red River expeditionary forces; (2) this company was detached for active service on the frontier immediately after the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, and wintered at North Pembina on the international boundary line during the winter of 1870 and 1871. The company was kept under strict discipline by the commanding officer, Captain H. Cooke, and none were permitted to visit Pembina in the United States territory without a countersigned pass; (3) there was no resident Catholic priest in Pembina, (at that time a territory of the United States), and to my personal knowledge the church remained closed during that winter. Neither Father Lestanc nor any other priest of

the Catholic church resided either in Pembina or North Pembina that winter.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true, and knowing that it is of the same force

and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence act, 1893.

J. F. TENNANT.

Declared before me at the village of Gretna in the province of Manitoba, this twelfth day of February, A.D. 1906.

M. LONG.

A Commissioner in B.R.

(Copy)

Dominion of Canada, province of Manitoba. To wit:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. George Bryce and the Rev. Jean Marie Lestanc: I, Joseph Francis Tennant, immigration agent of the village of Gretna in the province of Manitoba, do solemnly declare that (1) I was a member of No. 1 company of the 1st Ontario rifles of the Red River expeditionary forces; (2) this company was detached for active service on the frontier immediately after the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, and wintered at North Pembina on the international boundary line during the winter of 1870 and 1871. The company was kept under strict discipline by the commanding officer, Captain H. Cooke, and none were permitted to visit Pembina in the United States territory without a countersigned pass; (3) there was no resident Catholic priest in Pembina, (at that time a territory of the United States), and to my personal knowledge the church remained closed during that winter. Neither Father Lestanc nor any other priest of



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and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence act, 1893.

J. M. LESTANC, O.M.I.

Declared before me at the City of Calgary, in the Province of Alberta, this 3rd day of February, A.D. 1906,

W. J. COSTELLO,

J.P. in and for Alberta, Canada,

(Copy)

Dominion of Canada, province of Manitoba. To wit:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. George Bryce and the Rev. Jean Marie Lestanc: I, Joseph McCarthy, priest of the city of Winnipeg, in the province of Manitoba, do solemnly declare that I have carefully read the statutory declaration made by the Rev. Jean Marie Lestanc dated at Calgary, province of Alberta, on the third day of February, 1906, refusing the charge brought against him by the Rev. Dr. George Bryce in his history of Winnipeg, as follows: "That the Rev. Father Lestanc and William O'Donohue fled to the United States on the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry and spent the winter ('70 and '71) at Pembina planning mischief."

I was a resident of this country at the time the troops arrived at Fort Garry, and lived in the same house with Father Lestanc and I solemnly declare that the Rev. Father Lestanc did not fly to the United States on the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, or at any time thereafter. In the month of September 1870, the Rev. Father Lestanc, acting under instructions from Bishop Tache, left for Qu'Appelle mission, as stated in his statutory declaration above referred to.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act, 1893.

JOSEPH MCCARTHY, O.M.I.

Declared before me at the city of Winnipeg, in the province of Manitoba, this ninth day of February, A.D. 1906.

M. J. DALTON,

A Commissioner in B.R.

(Copy)

Dominion of Canada, province of Manitoba. To wit:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. George Bryce and the Rev. Jean Marie Lestanc: I, Joseph Francis Tennant, immigration agent of the village of Gretna in the province of Manitoba, do solemnly declare that (1) I was a member of No. 1 company of the 1st Ontario rifles of the Red River expeditionary forces; (2) this company was detached for active service on the frontier immediately after the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, and wintered at North Pembina on the international boundary line during the winter of 1870 and 1871. The company was kept under strict discipline by the commanding officer, Captain H. Cooke, and none were permitted to visit Pembina in the United States territory without a countersigned pass; (3) there was no resident Catholic priest in Pembina, (at that time a territory of the United States), and to my personal knowledge the church remained closed during that winter. Neither Father Lestanc nor any other priest of

the Catholic church resided either in Pembina or North Pembina that winter.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true, and knowing that it is of the same force

and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence act, 1893.

J. F. TENNANT.

Declared before me at the village of Gretna in the province of Manitoba, this twelfth day of February, A.D. 1906.

M. LONG.

A Commissioner in B.R.

(Copy)

Dominion of Canada, province of Manitoba. To wit:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. George Bryce and the Rev. Jean Marie Lestanc: I, Joseph Francis Tennant, immigration agent of the village of Gretna in the province of Manitoba, do solemnly declare that (1) I was a member of No. 1 company of the 1st Ontario rifles of the Red River expeditionary forces; (2) this company was detached for active service on the frontier immediately after the arrival of the troops at Fort Garry, and wintered at North Pembina on the international boundary line during the winter of 1870 and 1871. The company was kept under strict discipline by the commanding officer, Captain H. Cooke, and none were permitted to visit Pembina in the United States territory without a countersigned pass; (3) there was no resident Catholic priest in Pembina, (at that time a territory of the United States), and to my personal knowledge the church remained closed during that winter. Neither Father Lestanc nor any other priest of

the Catholic church resided either in Pembina or North Pembina that winter.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true, and knowing that it is of the same force

and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence act, 1893.

J. F. TENNANT.

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ring to impending changes in the Act, use words implying that they take it for granted Catholic schools will have to be dealt with in quite a different way from other non-provided ones." And he concludes that Catholics must be united and brave in resisting spoliation. "If," writes another correspondent, "we but close up our ranks and hold firmly together, the battle will soon be over, and gloriously over too."

In Manitoba also an educational conflict is at hand. The Winnipeg public school board is clamoring for compulsory education on the ostensible plea that it will save the children of the shiftless poor from the disastrous effects of a lazy and ignorant childhood spent amid the debasing influences of the street. Taught by a long experience in other countries of similar protestations of pure motives, followed, as soon as the compulsory clauses become law, by astute measures tending to force Catholic children into godless schools, we have no great faith in the much lauded benefits of compulsory education. At its best, even in a Catholic country, compulsory education, when it is not a mere exhortation to educate and carries with it the sanction of penalties, would be an invasion of parental rights. But compulsory education in this Protestant province, suggested and inspired, as it undoubtedly is by the Masonic and Orange lodges, would be a direct menace to Catholic schools. Its ultimate purpose, however skilfully disguised, is to decatholicize all our children. The Masonic platform, the world over, is substantially the same: first, make education compulsory, and in order to do so, make fine promises if necessary to the Catholics, who are the only consistent defenders of parental rights; and secondly, when once you have secured compulsory education you can, with the help of your crafty and learned lawyers, cunningly introduce into your legislation hidden pitfalls to entrap the