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FORT ROUGE

Part III.

Presided over by M. J. Arseneault, vice-president.

"Our Sister Societies" M. Joseph Bernier

"The Press"

"The Ladies" M. L. N. Carrier

God Save the King
The President's Address

Mr. Thos. Gellay, the president, on rising to open the toast list, addressed the gathering assembled to the following effect:

Yesterday we were assembled to celebrate our religious feast; we did so sincerely and without splendor. We have renewed publicly our attachment to our institutions and our faith, our hearts were full of emotion in listening to the eloquent and sincerely patriotic discourse given by our reverend chaplain.

When a religious sentiment is alive in the hearts of men, joy will brighten his face, and songs of cheerfulness which fill his soul will flow to his lips in great numbers. I can say with reason that these are the sentiments which exist and are alive in the heart of the French-Canadian nation. These sentiments are united with a thorough love of our country, our dear Canada—and yesterday joy and cheerfulness was to be seen in every face. In the name of the St. Jean Baptiste society and of the French element of this city we thank from the bottom of our hearts all those that have been instrumental in making a success of this feast. To the Rev. Father Allard and his assistants, to our chaplain, to the representatives of St. Jean Baptiste society of St. Boniface, to ladies and gentlemen who took up the collection, to the director of the choral union—the devoted Mr. Cardinal, and to the ladies and gentlemen who are members of the choir, and to the organist, Miss Casgrain, our sincere thanks are due. Very seldom has such good church music been heard in Winnipeg. To the officers of our society and to all, thanks are hereby tendered.

To-night we are assembled in fraternal feast. It is the nation that rejoices itself. We come here to pay homage to our national heroes, to sing our joys, take resolutions for the future and to demonstrate that the French-Canadians living on the banks of the Red River have kept proudly the remembrances of their brethren living on the St. Lawrence.

The speaker then spoke of his people, who are in every avocation of life in Winnipeg, and of their success. He also spoke of the society as a beneficiary institution, stating that it was not only a patriotic one, but one where help could be found.

Continuing, he said that the time of seeding was one of hope and desire. A gentle rain will soften the soil, the sun will warm it and bring confidence to the plowman. We have thrown to the ground seeds which will germinate with time, and from which we hope good fruit would come out. We are young yet. We are rich, because we have a bright future before us. We are strong, we are powerful, because we have not been vanquished, and we can hopefully press on to our fuller destiny.

The Health of the King

The toast of "The King" was proposed and received with musical honors. The enthusiasm displayed by the company in singing the national anthem would have testified the imperial instincts of the most loyal subjects of the empire.

Toasted His Holiness

Archbishop Langevin, who was expected to respond to the toast of "The Pope and the Catholic Church," was unavoidably absent through illness, and his place was worthily filled by Vicar-General Dugas. In an eloquent address frequently punctuated with applause, the vicar general replied to the toast. He regretted the illness of His Grace, but added that perhaps Providence

had directed that the shadow of his illness should come upon their feast, as all light and no shade was not for their highest good. The speaker then went on to define true patriotism, and showed how it traced back through the religion of childhood, of common history and common sorrows to the grand old man at Rome, Pius X. He cannot see everywhere, so he divided the government of his kingdom among the archbishops, amongst whom His Grace Mgr. Langevin occupied no inferior place. He was, in fact, the envoy of the pope to the people of this great western diocese.

The New Parish

"The Parish of the Sacred Heart" was coupled with the name of the Rev. Father Portelance, who has so endeared himself to the French-speaking Catholics of the city, and worthily did the genial cleric respond thereto. Referring to the church the reverend Father spoke of its being a refuge to the traveller through life, somewhat after the manner that the great monastery of St. Bernard offered itself as a refuge to the storm-bound mountain traveller. The speaker referred in appreciative terms to the help afforded by His Grace in establishing the church and also to the indebtedness of the parish of St. Jean Baptiste society whose assistance had assured the future stability of the parish.

To the Past Officers

Mr. J. B. Lauzon in responding to the toast of the past "Officers of the Society," said that it was a peculiar pleasure to him to speak to this toast. The past officers were very interesting and of those past officers, he, the speaker was not the worst sample of them all. (Laughter.) The St. Jean Baptiste Society of Winnipeg was organized in 1890. The first president was M. Fortin, and the original members numbered sixty-seven, and it seemed to him these sixty-seven men constituted the whole body of French-Canadians in Winnipeg at that time.

Mr. Lauzon then went on to refer to the past work of the society and described in racy fashion some characteristics of their past presidents, a list of whom he enumerated as follows: G. E. Fortin, Ed. Richard, C. A. Lemieux, Jos. E. Dumouchel, L. O. Genest, Geo. Germain, J. A. Richard, C. H. Royal, L. N. Fournier, J. L. Beliveau, T. H. Bourgoin, R. L. Chevrier, J. B. Lauzon A. L. Picard, and Thos. Gellay.

The Toast of the Evening

"The Day we celebrate," responded to by M. A. J. H. Dubuc, furnished the "piece de resistance" of the evening. In glowing terms the speaker referred to the early hardships endured by the French Canadians, and how out of those early struggles a strong, enduring, national character had been formed. The names of many of their past patriots were mentioned, the enthusiasm of the gathering being aroused again and again at Mr. Dubuc's eloquent periods. As the idea is being seriously contemplated, to publish Mr. Dubuc's oration in pamphlet form, it is not given in extension in this report.

In concluding a speech, however, which from beginning to end was listened to with the keenest interest, the speaker referred in appreciative terms to the security afforded to all who dwell beneath the folds of the Union Jack, and expressed the desire that nothing should interfere with the growing regard which existed between the French and English-speaking subjects of the King.

The Learned Professions

The toast of the City of Winnipeg was not responded to, in the absence of the mayor, so Mr. J. Dumoulin, who had charge of that part of the toast list, introduced that of "The Learned Professions" coupled with the names of Morace Chevrier, M.P.P., and L. Delorme. Mr. Chevrier said he hardly understood why he had been selected to respond to this

toast, except that it was recognized to-day, that the professions are becoming commercialized and commerce is becoming professionalized. Both profit by change. The speaker referred to the younger men who were entering the professions and declared that these would become worthy of their pride. Referring to the great men supplied by the French Canadians to the various professions, the speaker mentioned the Dames, the Fafards, the Lamberts, amongst the doctors, and the Dubucs, the Prud'hommes and Prendergasts amongst the legal fraternity. Their men also stood high amongst the theologians and educationists. Proceeding the speaker said that the future of the race was a most important subject to all patriotic Canadians, and anything that tended to race improvement was worthy of their regard.

The French-Canadians as a race have qualities of mind that have in the past caused them to excel as jurists, scientists, political economists, journalists, and teachers. These professions are the constructive elements in human progress. Men in these professions are those to whom the majority look for guidance. Seeing that the natural characteristics of the French Canadians are such as to give them prominence, the way to regain and hold any influence lost, or now in hand, is to consecrate the best men, our best thinkers, to those careers. By so doing the French-Canadians in Western Canada may yet regain the ascendancy which they may have lost by numerical weakness.

This is our true line of development. This is our clearly marked course of action. The ascendancy of quality over quantity. The triumph of mind over matter.

When those circumstances arise, when that day comes, who shall say that "Ichabod" is written over the French-Canadian race in western Canada, who shall say that our glory has departed, and that the onward march of Anglo-Saxon dominion has been coincident with the destruction of French genius?

As a race we stand at the parting of the ways. We are face to face with opportunities as tremendous as ever faced those heroes of the past, of whose deeds Mr. Dubuc has so eloquently spoken. Let it not be said that any of us fail in high endeavor or noble deed. Just as, in the days of the great Roman empire, a small colony of Greeks who spoke an alien tongue, dominated, directed and controlled all the mighty activities of the world wide Roman empire, so, if we will, history will repeat itself, and we, men of speech now alien to a great majority in Manitoba, if we adhere to the ideals of our race, may attain control at the very moment men fear we are tottering on the abyss of racial insignificance and national destruction—and rule when apparently destiny has decided we should serve.

L. Delorme followed and said: "There is no more beautiful spectacle than that of a nation united for the enjoyment of a holy and patriotic happiness. This is in existence wherever French-Canadians have congregated to-day. We have each our part in the work of the formation of a national soul, and it is my duty to show the distinctive part which men in the learned professions must take to this end. The lawyer and the doctor have helped in our society towards this ideal. The professions have ethics which are of a high order and the fitting of man for such a high order can be obtained only at the price of self-sacrifice. The importance of the professions in our society to-day can best be illustrated by saying that we expect of them all we did of that class of whom we said 'Noblesse oblige.' Of all professions which have made for the advancement of our race, that of the church stands first.

The Workingmen

was responded to by L. H. Fournier: "I regret that I lack the talent necessary to handle such a toast. The working class has made it felt that theirs is the equal of any in society to-day. Strong in numbers, great in strength of character, the working class does not seek glory, but is always ready to face the stern reality of life as the corner stone of society. The religious class could not have succeeded without the working man; monopolists could not exist but by the permission of the working class; merchant kings and princes of finance could not exist as such were it not for the knight of the pick."

Sister Societies

The "Sister Societies" was next toast and it was ably responded to by Joseph Bernier, president of the St. Jean Baptiste society, St. Boniface. He spoke of the glories and of the nobility of character of the French-Canadian race. Born of the treachery and desertion of the ministers of France, nurtured by the life-giving spirit of British Institu-

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tions, even then it could not have lived were it not for the help and guidance of the Catholic Church, which has known so well how to develop its inherent ambition for nationhood. He thanked them for their consideration towards their sister societies and closed with these words: "Worthy sons of worthy sires; pioneers upon the soil of Manitoba, you have a temple erected unto the God of nations from which you will raise your prayers in language learned at your mother's knee. Honor to you! Success and prosperity! You have merited the admiration of your compatriots."

The Ladies

This time honored toast was in the hands of L. N. Carrier, and right chivalrously did he acquit himself of the responsibility. It has hardly ever been the pleasure of a Canadian to hear this toast as delicately responded to. His remark anent the organizing power of ladies was exemplified by the wonderful success of this banquet which was entirely the result of the lady presidents and their charming younger assistants. During the evening several selections of vocal and instrumental music were rendered, which aided materially towards the complete enjoyment of the festival.

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