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LONDON, SATURDAY, NOV. 7, 1925

THE NEW POLAND

The newspapers the other day carried a despatch informing the reading world that Poland had just succeeded in securing a loan of \$100,000,000 through Vienna bankers, with whom banking interests of the United States were closely associated.

That news item has great and pleasing significance. It is not the amount—though that is one that few post-war European countries could negotiate—but the fact that in the judgment of world finance there is no question of the stability, progress, and prosperity of the new Poland.

In recent numbers of *The Commonwealth* Ladislav Wroblewski, minister plenipotentiary to the United States from Poland, has two most interesting and informative articles on *The New Poland*. In the first this distinguished son of Poland recalls some of the outstanding facts in Poland's thousand years of history. Glorious, and important in its influence on the civilization of Europe and the world, was much of that history. "The rescue of Vienna by King Sobieski in 1683 was the last flash of Poland's vanishing greatness." But that great incident had great results. It "saved Europe from Mohammedan domination, saved Christian civilization from, at best, the fate of the Balkan States. Soon Poland enters into the dark days of dismemberment and oppression; her fate was the fate of Ireland. Singularly alike; but Ireland's period of slavery and arrested national development lasted six times that of Poland. What Mr. Wroblewski says of Poland is, therefore, even more true of Ireland:

"If proof be needed of the infallibility of the dictum that a nation's soul, like a man's soul, is immortal—that material force never can prevail against moral power—such proof has been furnished by 120 years of Poland's life while in physical fetters. During that time, three Empires—the Russian, the German, and the Austrian—representing 250,000,000 inhabitants and maintaining two-thirds of all the armies of the world, endeavored to kill in a more or less clever way, Poland's national conscience. What was the answer of the soul of Poland? During 120 years, not one moment of resignation. The inevitability of regeneration was an article of faith for every Pole."

"The day of August 6, 1914, came. No historian will ever be able to picture the storm of intensely dramatic feeling aroused among men in various parts of the globe by the beginning of a new chapter in the world's story. But where, ever the Polish language was spoken, the World War was received with the words 'at last'—words which meant relief, hope, faith. And yet this war brought 600,000 Poles enrolled in the German and Austrian armies into bloody conflict with 500,000 Poles in the Russian army. No horror of Greek tragedy could surpass such a merciless fate. But there was no mourning in Poland on this account. Everybody felt, everybody believed, everybody knew that those who would come back safe from the War would live to see their country free. So the final act, the most elaborately cruel act of the long drama, the killing of brothers serving one oppressor by brothers serving another oppressor, develops into a triumphal prologue, into the wakening of the nation from its temporary death. I dwell upon this element of faith in the inevitability of the regeneration because I see in it a decisive argument for the immortality of a nation's soul."

This Polish writer sees the marvellous, bordering on the miraculous, in Poland's resurrection: "Russia, the colossus of the

East, tumbled down fighting against Germany; the German steam roller was crushed in the West. The three political powers which had strangled, or believed they had strangled, the freedom of Poland, fell down while fighting on opposite sides, regardless of their affiliations with the ultimate victors or the vanquished. Finally, on January 8, 1918, the President of the United States, laying down a definite peace platform, announced in Washington, 6,000 miles from Poland, the independence of Poland as one of America's chief war aims. Up to that day, there were, besides Poles, few believers in a free Poland emerging out of the War. After Woodrow Wilson had spoken, New Poland became an unescapable reality for the whole world."

Few Catholics throughout the world but will see with this Polish fellow-Catholic that "the finger of God is here;" even though, unlike him, they do not feel in their very blood the thousand years of Polish history and Polish aspirations. But to Maynard Keynes, the distinguished English economist, the finger of God was invisible. In the Consequences of the Peace he scoffs contemptuously at the dream of a great Catholic power in East-Central Europe. Clear-headed and convincing as his famous volume is, and wonderfully accurate as was his analytic forecast of the disastrous consequences of the Peace Treaty—the last six years' experience has proved that—we now know that he was as wrong about Poland as the greatest blunders of them all were about many other things.

For a time it looked as though Poland were on the brink of financial and economic ruin—ruin irretrievable. The Polish mark sky-rocketed with the Russian ruble while yet hundreds of millions of dollars were being "invested" by otherwise sane people in the comparatively stable German mark, which in the end soared beyond the reach of calculation or imagination into trillions to the dollar. The chaotic state of its currency added incalculably to devastated Poland's stupendous difficulties in reestablishing the social and economic life of the nation. Conditions were such that the Maynard Keynes type of prophet and others, to whom the wish was father of the thought, appeared to be justified in their prediction of the ultimate if not speedy collapse of the new Poland.

The year 1924 brought a definite settlement of the great problem of the exchange value of Poland's currency. The budget for that year was balanced, and a national bank of issue established. Zloty—the new Polish monetary unit—is now at or about par.

The Polish minister at Washington modestly writes:

"I am not expert enough to be able to say whether it was within human power to introduce a sound currency earlier. I do not feel qualified to state whether it was at all possible, otherwise than by a miracle, to establish a normal currency in a country which inherited the Austrian crown, the Russian ruble, and the German mark as circulating media, and which had no gold mines. I am not able to judge whether it was possible to organize at the same time, within an incredibly short period, the entire public, social, and cultural life of the country along modern lines."

And he adds this paragraph which is illuminating as revealing the Polish point of view:

"But if it were not possible to do all these things at one time, then, I have no doubt, it was wiser, and more practical too, to devote all our energy in those early years to education, sanitation, protection against epidemics, to the restoration of railroad communication, than to attempt experiments in currency reform, experiments which, in all probability, in that melancholy environment of bankrupt countries, would have proved disappointing. I believe that those other problems relating to the physical, and moral welfare of the people were more urgent, were of a higher type, and that it was more profitable, even from a materialistic point of view, to approach them first."

The writer from whom we quote gives some interesting statistics showing that, while pessimistic outsiders despaired of Poland's future, the Poles themselves attacked their stupendous problems with faith, and hope, and high courage:

"In the dismembered pre-War Poland there were two universities—

now there are six. The number of high schools has been increased from 463 in 1914, to 800 in 1923; the number of primary schools from 18,000 before the War, to 31,000 at the end of last year. Instances where our peasants proceeded first to rebuild a damaged schoolhouse or to erect a new one, and only afterwards to rebuild their demolished homesteads, were not rare. The number of teachers is not sufficient to cope with the magnitude of the work. Still, about 10,000 school teachers are being trained every year—we expect within two years to equip every school adequately. Unlike the way in which Poland herself was treated, she does not discourage education among the national minorities within her territory, and it is the Polish government that opens new schools wherever they are needed in the provinces inhabited in part by Ukrainians, Germans, and White Ruthenians."

All this must challenge the admiration and enlist the good will of enlightened people the world over. We might take for granted the enormous amount of work done by way of physical reparation—for all Poland was a devastated region—but for the fact that some details enable us to grasp more adequately the incredible task that Poland has already achieved:

"The Polish railways started in 1915 with a total of 5,235 miles, whereas the present railway system comprises 11,000 miles. There were destroyed in the War 7,500 bridges, 93 stations, and over 3,000 other railway buildings. Since the end of the War with the Bolsheviks, all this damage has been repaired. . . . We had only 2,000 locomotives in 1918, now we have 5,600; 110,000 freight cars instead of 5,000."

We said at the opening of this article that the fact that world finance decided in favor of a large loan to the Polish government was a guarantee of the stability, progress and future prosperity of Poland. It goes without saying that financial judgment is not swayed by sentiment; nor is it a blind judgment, but one based on the most extensive and accurate information. The United States of America have already enormous investments abroad, and must, in the present condition of the world, enormously extend such foreign investment. Mr. Wroblewski quotes Mr. Willis H. Booth, vice-president of the Guaranty Trust Company, and president of the International Chamber of Commerce, who visited Poland last year. Though we reprinted at the time in the columns of the *Record* this as well as other testimonies to the vigorous life of the new Poland, we give here a few sentences from what Mr. Booth said on his return from Poland to the United States:

"The physical conditions of Poland are showing each year a marked improvement. To any one familiar with the country three years ago, its present status is a source of amazement. Largely an agricultural country, we find 100 per cent. of the arable land under cultivation at present, though the yield will be only about 80 per cent. of the pre-war yield on account of lack of fertilizer. Modern methods of crop rotation are employed, and the living conditions of the rural population compare most favorably with those of other European countries. . . . Poland has both high and low grade coal, lumber, low grade iron, and salt in abundance, with ample surplus of the latter for export. There are also rich oil fields and deposits of zinc, lead, and some silver. The iron and coal industry centering about Katowice reminds one of Pittsburgh, with its forest of smoke stacks. . . . The textile industry in Lodz and surrounding cities is in a very high physical state. Though these large mills were wrecked during the German occupation, they have been restored to first class condition, and are equal to textile mills anywhere. . . . The transportation lines and the main trunk highways are in a first class condition. . . . The people in the main are well fed and well clothed, energetic and apparently happy. Altogether Poland as a country presents an attractive view to the investigator. With rich agriculture properly diversified with industry, it can easily support in a prosperous way a population larger than its present one of approximately thirty millions. The resources and wealth are sufficient to form the background of a sound system of taxation which will even

support the military establishment necessary in the face of exposed frontiers."

The testimony of this hard-headed business man, who investigated Polish conditions on behalf of American industry and finance, is convincing, at least so far as the material prosperity of Poland is concerned. But another American business man, Mr. Samuel S. Vaulchain, president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, who also visited Poland last year, and whose interest likewise was in business and foreign trade, testifies to something higher, but something on which not only business, but social order and civilization itself, may ultimately depend.

Mr. Vaulchain said:

"Poland is going to be the salvation of all business in Europe, because Poland will separate the Bolshevik tendencies of the East from the democratic countries of the West. Every bit of traffic between Russia and western Europe must go through Poland. Every railroad passing either to the east or the west passes through Warsaw. Liberty regulated by law, that which has made the American nation what it is today, is the slogan of an enthusiastic, optimistic, and determined nation."

There is no question that the greatest menace to Europe, to the Christian civilization of the world, is Bolshevism,—atheistic communism, violent and virulent. And the very cement of the impregnable bulwark that Poland opposes—and has already effectively opposed—to the tide of Bolshevism which threatens to submerge Europe, is the Catholic religion; that religion which informs the conscience, the ideals, the aspirations, the institutions, and the social order of Poland.

OTTAWA BOYS' CLUB

Twentieth century civilization seems to be equally capable of producing unhealthy conditions and of remedying them. Our industrialized city life, with its thousands of inventions to serve the comfort of man, has, by its multifarious occupations and amusements, deprived family life of much of its intimacy. The most restless member of society, the boy, is to a large extent, not merely in cities but also in towns, beyond effective family guidance during the greater proportion of his periods of recreation. A boy's unconquerable desire is to be a man. Some type of man is his hero and him he endeavors to imitate. The boy's heroes should be his father, his school master and his priest, together with those men who in past or present history have attained eminence for the nobility of their character and the greatness of their achievement. Yet it is unfortunately impossible for father, school master and priest to play more than a minor role in the development of the boy's character during the latter's free time. His father is usually from home at work practically all day and has little opportunity for companionship with his son. The school master, if the boy is fortunate enough to have one, for most boys in primary schools are under school mistresses, has little to do with the guidance of the boy outside the school house and school yard. The priest, while he desires to be all things to all boys, and while he provides them with the necessities of religion—the eucharistic sacrifice, the sacraments and religious education—is physically incapable of so multiplying himself as to enter intimately into the recreation of two, three or four hundred boys. As the result, the boy during his time of play, when he is most master of his own activities, lacks usually the presence of father, teacher and priest and falls under the influence of the most dominant character present. This is usually the leader of the gang. We can learn even from a comic cartoon, "Mickey McGuire Himself" is a picture of such a gang leader far truer to life than many imagine. The evils caused by the street gang are not easily exaggerated. The enormous wastage, moral, intellectual and economic, due to the deteriorating effects of misapplied recreation, constitutes one of the pressing social problems of the day. So many of our boys, who have the highest form of idealism presented for their imitation by teacher and preacher, who see daily an example of sacrifice, industry and love in the lives of their parents, and who receive in Church the sanctifying graces which

should preserve them against defection and carry them to perfection—so many of these very boys frustrate the fond hope of parents, teachers and priests and drift into shiftless mediocrity or even into crimes against the law of God and the law of the country. What is the cause of this? One cause is that the boy is, during his recreation period, over-exposed to influences deteriorating to character. Whether the boy be rich or poor in material goods, guilty of offences against the law of the land or socially impeccable, he is rightly described as "underprivileged" if his recreation hurts him instead of helping him. To remedy this evil arising from the misuse of play is the purpose of all those engaged in the free time guidance of the boy. One of the most effective remedial means employed is a Boys' Club conducted by a professionally trained supervisor. A strikingly successful example of such a club is the Ottawa Boys' Club, an account of which was presented to our readers last week.

Four factors are required for the successful functioning of a Boys' Club—a capable, trained and paid supervisor, a suitable club house, sufficient funds and boys. When the first three conditions are present the boys will come. The supervisor provides and directs the physical, intellectual and vocational programme and maintains a healthy moral tone in the club. He is assisted by part time workers and by volunteer helpers, all of whom are trained by him or take special courses in boy work elsewhere. The direction of boys during their free time is even a more delicate task than their instruction in the class room; for they must go to school, but their attendance at the club is wholly voluntary. Hence the necessity of getting the best trained workers and of having permanent, in addition to the caretaker of the building, at least one full time professional boy worker. The Ottawa Boys' Club spends about \$5,000 a year on salaries. It is money well spent.

The need of Boys' Clubs is no longer a subject of debate among Catholics. For Pope Benedict XV. invited the Knights of Columbus to establish a club of this nature in Rome, and today, in answer to that invitation, the Knights are conducting not merely one such club in Rome but five such centres in the eternal city.

From a religious standpoint there are four kinds of boys' clubs attended by Catholics; first, clubs controlled exclusively by Protestants; secondly, undenominational clubs controlled by a directorate consisting of Catholics and Protestants; thirdly, clubs controlled by Catholic directors but open to all boys, irrespective of creed; and finally, clubs exclusively Catholic in directorate and membership. The first type of club, represented chiefly by the Y.M.C.A., is unsuited to Catholics. The Y.M.C.A. conducts Protestant religious services and frequently attempts proselytizing. Its anti-Catholic activities were rightly condemned by the Holy See. The second type of club, with its mixed directorate, is not itself objectionable, if proper precautions be taken to safeguard the religious life of the boys. There is always a danger, however, that by the choice of the supervisor, or in some similar way, a tone be given to the club, detrimental to the Catholic character of its Catholic members. Therefore only when the circumstances necessitate it—and of this the sole competent judge is the bishop—should Catholics undertake to form a club with a mixed religious directorate. The fourth type of club, with directorate and membership exclusively Catholic, is as justifiable as are Catholic schools open to Catholics only. In a country such as Italy, for example, this is the only practical type of Boys' Club for Catholics. To be successful, it must be interparochial and have a professional supervisor. Parish clubs run by merely volunteer workers cannot long compete with the Y.M.C.A. A parish club, especially if it has a club house, can however become the nucleus of such an interparochial club. Our clerical readers will doubtless remember the very helpful article on Catholic Clubs published in the October number of the *Ecclesiastical Review*. There is certain to be a great increase of such clubs in America in cities where Catholics are very numerous.

In addition to the above mentioned type of club, which is exclusively Catholic in control and membership, there is the club exclusively Catholic in control whose membership is open to all the boys of the community. The Ottawa Boys' Club is of this type. By its Letters Patent, its chaplain is appointed by the Archbishop of Ottawa, and he and the five English-speaking parish priests of Ottawa are the ex officio directors; and its elective directors, who are laymen, must be members of the Catholic Church. By virtue of the same Letters Patent, the club is open to all the boys of Ottawa irrespective of religious belief, maternal language or ancestral nationality. There can be no doubt but that a club of this nature is fully justified. Our Catholic hospitals receive non-Catholic patients; our Catholic convent schools teach non-Catholic pupils; our Catholic St. Vincent de Paul Society, by the constitution given it by its founder, helps non-Catholic poor. For our non-Catholic fellow citizen is our neighbor whom we must love as ourselves. It is our duty to help him, according to our opportunities, in all his spiritual and material needs. We are not true Catholics unless our charity be catholic, that is, universal. By allowing non-Catholic boys to avail themselves of the advantages of our clubs, we are not merely helping them to become better citizens, but we are also helping Mother Church by breaking down prejudice and by increasing true brotherly feeling.

The primary reason why such a club opens its doors to non-Catholics is not that it may make an appeal to a certain number of non-Catholics for financial assistance. On the contrary, it is that the club may itself be of assistance to all the boys of the community, non-Catholics as well as Catholic. With a Catholic supervisor and Catholic volunteer workers there is no danger that the Catholic philosophy of life should in any way be sacrificed or minimized; while with that jealous care for the rights of others, which is a characteristic of Catholicism, there will be no possible danger of any person attempting to undermine the religious convictions, heretical though they be, of the non-Catholic boys who frequent the club. One example may serve to illustrate how this works out in practice. During the six weeks that the Ottawa Boys' Club conducted their summer camp at Mink Lake, Mass was celebrated every Sunday in the camp for the Catholics, while the Protestant boys were motored to Douglas to a Protestant service. All Catholics are indeed anxious that all those outside the Church should by freely becoming members of the Church enjoy all those spiritual advantages of which Christ has made the Catholic Church the exclusive and necessary vehicle. But just as a Catholic would not think of interfering with the religious education of the child of his Protestant next door neighbor, so the Catholic directors of the Ottawa Boys' Club very rightly avoid interfering in any way with the religious convictions of its non-Catholic members.

The CATHOLIC RECORD congratulates the directors and supporters of the Ottawa Boys' Club. Its success during the past two years has been the result of unselfish sacrifice of time and money by public spirited citizens. There is need of such a Club in Ottawa and, as the need will last, the Club will last.

THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME

By THE OBSERVER

It is no surprise to Catholics to see the Sacred Scriptures gradually abandoned by the religious descendants of those who made the great mistake of supposing that the Sacred Scriptures were the sole rule of faith. That a book without a teacher, read and studied upon a principle of the absolute right of private interpretation, should be misunderstood was absolutely inevitable. Catholics said from the first that that would be the inevitable outcome.

From the first of the Protestant heresy, that was the outcome of an attempt to make the mind of the individual the interpreter of the book which of all the books in the world is the most difficult to understand. The books of the statutes of the various countries of the world are simple to understand in comparison with the Bible. Yet, no nation has ever been so blind to human frailty and fallibility as to

allow every private citizen to interpret its laws for himself and to shape his civic conduct accordingly.

We erect courts, and we give to the judges of those courts the power, and not only the power, but the exclusive right, to make authoritative interpretations of the meaning of the laws of the land. No sane man would think for a moment of doing anything else in a matter so important as the interpretation of the laws of a country.

But, a man who should make an erroneous interpretation of the laws of his country would be in a far better case than a man who makes an error in interpreting the revelation of God to man. The effects of the former error are only of this world. The other mistake may damn a soul and indeed by continuous effect damn the souls of millions of others. We do not mean that God will damn anyone for an honest mistake. But there are other matters to be thought of in respect of honest mistakes.

Can anyone calculate the evil results to those who first rejected the necessity of several of the Sacraments? Can anyone calculate the ill that has resulted to the millions of their descendants by the closing of that channel of God's grace?

Besides, there is no limit to the operation of private interpretation. It has led thousands to atheism. Interpretation by private individuals has led thousands to reject the Bible altogether. Where is the limit? Where can the line be drawn except where the Catholic Church has always drawn it?

We have instances of the evil operation of this false principle all through the four hundred years since Protestantism first proclaimed it.

A good deal of attention is being attracted by the disputes now in progress in the United States and to some extent in Canada, amongst the ministers of the Anglican Church. They are divided into two parties, one of which strikes freely at doctrines which have been, by most Anglicans, regarded as of the substance of the Christian faith. The other party holds to those doctrines. But we notice that in some cases the arguments of men of the latter party who are beginning to be called "Fundamentalists" are far from holding to the real fundamentals of Christianity or even to what was once the standard Anglican understanding of Christian fundamentals.

In one or two cases we have seen expressions from so-called fundamentalists which simply throw the Sacred Scriptures open to attack by anyone. Doubtless such is not at all their intention; at least it is possible that they do not clearly perceive the logical results of taking a too yielding attitude. The fact is, it is getting to be comparatively rare to find anyone amongst the ministry of non-Catholic churches who is willing to stand up for the inspiration of the Scriptures as it was once agreed upon by practically all Protestants. For instance, of what we mean, one fundamentalist said the other day that he did not believe the story of Jonah and the whale. Another man who calls himself a fundamentalist is understood to be of the opinion that there is no hell or that it is not eternal. With such gaps in their fundamentals, it is not to be expected that others will refrain from making the logical remark: "If you give up certain parts of the Sacred Scriptures what is there to prevent us from giving up still more of the Sacred Scriptures? Is there a point to which we may go and no farther? Why are you a better judge than anyone else of where that point is, if it is at all?"

We see in this controversy men who have given up, one after another, all or most of the main doctrines of Christianity, and who laugh at the idea that they can be put out of the Anglican Church. And that is not so strange; for if a Church cannot command assent to at least a minimum standard of doctrines, how can she put anyone out of her communion? Modernists can point to men in England who were well known to disbelieve in some of the main doctrines of Christianity as taught for centuries in that Church and who nevertheless rose high in that Church. Why are some ministers to be disciplined when others just as heretical have been made bishops?