

The Catholic Record

Price of subscription—\$1.50 per annum.
United States & Europe—\$2.50.
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LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1919

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A movement going on in educational circles in Quebec is attracting widespread attention and exciting no end of comment in Ontario and elsewhere.

Briefly the facts are these. Mr. Bouchard, Member of the Legislature for St. Hyacinthe, a Catholic in religion and a Liberal in politics, has for some time urged the need of a law compelling parents and guardians to send their children within certain age limits to school for a certain minimum time each year. Such a law is in force generally throughout Canada and the United States. In support of Mr. Bouchard's Bill for Compulsory Education—or as others prefer to call it Compulsory School Attendance—many of the most prominent Catholics in Montreal interviewed His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi. Amongst them were Lord Shaughnessy, Sir Alexander Lacoste, Senators Dandurand, Beaubien and Beique, Judges Lafontaine, Fortin, Archer, Marechal, Demers, L'Eschou, Cooquet, Loranger, and many others prominent in the social, business, and professional life of Montreal. Perhaps even more significant was the presence of prominent members of the School Boards of the city, Mr. Desaulniers and Mr. A. W. Patenaude.

It has been given out by Senator Dandurand that the account of the interview which appeared in Le Canada was official. The fallibility or prejudice of reporters does not mar the value of Le Canada's summary of Mr. Patenaude's presentation of the case for the intervention of the law in order that the schools of Montreal should be enabled to fulfill their mission. Declaring that having interested himself seriously in the welfare of the children he bitterly deplored their premature withdrawal from school. Mr. Patenaude speaking for his division of the city continues:

"Relying on the statistics furnished him by the principals of 36 schools of the northern district he showed that in the month of September, 1917, there were in these 36 schools 2,411 pupils in the 3rd year; in the 4th year 1,608; in the 5th 656 pupils; in the 6th 296; in the 7th 150; and in the 8th year 59. That is to say that 27% only of the third grade make their fifth, and only 13% their sixth class. These figures include both boys and girls; and it is to be noted in the last years of the school course that the number of girls is much greater than the number of boys, which leaves it to be inferred that parents withdraw the little boys from school to put them to work. So that the chief cause for their leaving school is the inordinate love of money (l'amour injustifiable du gain.)"

Le Devoir questions this motive on the part of parents and points out that the Charity Organization Society affirmed that in Montreal during the War there was a great number of families who were unable to procure sufficient food for proper nutrition, and intimates that it may have been under these hard conditions that parents with grief at heart were compelled to withdraw their children from school and put them to work. This condition may in some measure explain Mr. Patenaude's startling statistics; but whether or to what extent economic conditions enter into the question it is one which will doubtless receive searching investigation. The state of affairs disclosed demands not only investigation but remedy. On the opponents of the remedy proposed—Mr. Bouchard's legal measure—lies the responsibility and the duty of squarely facing the condition and of not merely proposing but carrying into effect a more efficacious remedy. We have seen it stated that there are more pupils attending school in Montreal and Quebec than the School Commissions of these cities are able to provide for at all adequately. And it is asked: What then is the use of a law of compulsory attendance? Such futile and irritating paltering with an urgent and serious question will not strengthen the case of those who descend to it. The question at least calls for serious discussion if out of the wholesome discontent with existing conditions a better state of things is to be evolved. Scarcely

more comprehensible is an editorial in l'Action Catholique on Mr. Bouchard's speech in the Legislature in support of his measure of Compulsory Education. This paper charges Mr. Bouchard, "no matter what he may say," of attacking the Council of Public Instruction as at present composed. It will be remembered that the Catholic Committee of the Council is composed of all the bishops who have seats therein ex-officio and an equal number of appointed laymen. Protestants have their own Committee with untrammelled control of their own schools.

L'Action Catholique continues: "Mr. Bouchard has long been known as favoring a Ministry of Public Instruction. And he it was who in recent years on a similar occasion proposed—while awaiting something better!—to reform the Council in which sit our bishops, and to set on foot an initial system of State schools."

"And this throws into singular relief one of our fundamental objections and justifies us in reaffirming that the noisiest advocates of Compulsory School Attendance are at the same time the warmest partisans of a Ministry of Public Instruction or even of State schools, in a word of Statism in educational matters."

It is readily conceded that when the State in matters of education or religion invades the domain of conscience the way is opened for the most odious of tyrannies. The case of Germany has strikingly illustrated some of the evil effects of the principle of absolute control of education by the State. But surely a Catholic may advocate and work strenuously to secure both a measure of legal compulsion in the matter of school attendance and a Ministry of Education without being branded as favoring that State absolutism which invades the domain of conscience and denies the rights of parents and those of the Church. Our own experience

of the small influence parents, keenly desirous of giving the best and most Catholic education possible to their children, could under the present system exercise over the conduct of their own schools, often led us to hope for a Ministry of Education responsible to the elected representatives of the people; and this not for the suppression of parental rights, but for the sake of guaranteeing their fuller and freer exercise. Parents may surely call the State to aid them in the matter of the education of their children, and delegate to their representatives in the Legislature powers similar to but greater than those they are accustomed to delegate to elected school commissioners. The Quebec system has nevertheless much to commend it. No one but an ignorant fanatic will deny that the bishops are serious, earnest, scholarly men, sincerely desirous of promoting the educational interests of their people; while the exigencies of politics may give the portfolio of Education, to quite a different sort of man to whose qualifications are largely if not entirely political, and not even in the best sense of that word. Nor will it be denied that the bishops have exceptional facilities for keeping in touch with the educational requirements of the people and for ascertaining the measure in which the schools actually meet those requirements. On the other hand, weighted with onerous duties which demand unremitting attention, it may be questioned if even with the exceptional qualifications the bishops undoubtedly have, they can in the few meetings of the Council give that attention demanded by such an infinitely complex matter as the control and direction of a school system.

In Ontario we have in recent years to a very considerable extent abandoned the principle of a responsible Ministry of Education. We have created the office of Superintendent of Education with wide statutory powers which gives the incumbent a large measure of autocratic control. It is quite safe to say that the experiment has utterly failed. That is not to say that a responsible Minister of Education solves all problems satisfactorily. In theory, at any rate, since education is one of the most important functions of provincial government, we should have an Opposition party with a constructive educational policy. Then when election time comes round and the people demand an account of the Government's educational stewardship, knowing their own needs the people have the opportunity of bringing their influence directly to bear on matters of education.

Unfortunately practice does not always square with theory. Apart from the partial but serious departure in Ontario from the principle of responsible government in the matter

of education there is another reason why our Ministry of Education has failed to fulfil its theoretical function. The electorate has been so bedevilled by appeals to sectarian prejudice and to frantic but spurious "patriotism" that it has almost forgotten how to give an intelligent verdict on educational or any other questions on their merits. There is, however, at present a widespread and deep dissatisfaction with the conduct of educational affairs. Though somewhat formless and vague, and lacking leadership or direction as yet, this is a wholesome and hopeful sign.

The main point we wish to make here is that whatever may be said or intimated to the contrary by friend or foe Catholics are quite as free as any others to advocate that system or measure which seems to them most favorable to their educational interests.

So, also, in the matter of Compulsory School Attendance. The fact that our nominal compulsory legislation has been allowed to fall largely into innocuous desuetude is not at all a conclusive argument that it would not be useful or even necessary in Quebec. It may have served a very useful purpose in Ontario at a certain stage of our educational history. And despite the "fundamental objection" of l'Action Catholique that its most strenuous advocates also favor a Ministry of Education for Quebec, Catholics as such are as free to work for it as to oppose it.

And just at the moment of this writing we read that the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction of Quebec while opposing at present compulsory education "decided to investigate the statistics relative to school attendance and see later if there is need of passing a law of compulsory education." A significant fact which amongst other things shows that the bishops of Quebec are less prone to unmeasured condemnation of the advocates of the measure in question than some of their ardent and over-zealous defenders. Indeed scarifying Mr. Bouchard hardly answers the reputable and educated Catholics of Montreal who are quite as intelligent and quite as loyal as the opponents of the proposed measure. And the Council has apparently no "fundamental objections" to the recognition of this patent fact.

Our reason for discussing the matter with our readers will be evident to many. The matter has been thrust on the attention of everybody. It stares from the headlines of the papers; it is the subject of general conversation and comment. It goes without saying that a certain element of our people see in it a stick with which to beat Catholics, the hierarchy, and the Church itself. And they have so used it. But yapping at the bigots contributes nothing to the enlightenment of that great number of Protestants—and a number of Catholics also—who are sincerely desirous of understanding the Catholic position before condemning or commending it. No doubt many of our readers have had our own experience in the matter of courteous inquiries from fair and open-minded Protestants in the premises.

The unreasoning prejudice which condemns everything in the sister province because Quebec is Catholic is little worse than the indiscriminate defense of everything in that province for the same reason.

The present agitation in Quebec is a hopeful sign; and we hope and believe that whatever the outcome may be the result will make for the good of Quebec and for the good of Canada.

THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL QUESTION

A few extracts from the news items of the past week or two furnish food for thought and are their own comment.

Washington, Jan. 27.—Prohibition of immigration for four years after the war, except from Cuba, Mexico, Canada and Newfoundland, was agreed upon unanimously today by the House Immigration committee.

Paris, Jan. 28.—The European workers believe that labor will have the right to go and come freely wherever employment is to be found, regardless of frontiers, declared George Nicoll Barnes, Labor representative on the British peace delegation, in discussing the proposal to prohibit immigration to the United States for some years after the signing of the peace treaty. European labor, he said, was strongly opposed to such a law, although it was unable to prevent its passage.

Here endeth the first lesson.

The second chapter is a bit lengthy; but we can't see where it could be cut down without spoiling the moral.

Washington, Feb. 5.—Democrats and Republicans in the Senate today joined in criticizing the new British embargo on imports and calling attention to the effect it would have on American industry. During the discussion that followed, Senator Reed, of Missouri, Democrat, attacked the Carnegie peace foundations activities abroad, questioned its loyalty and declared it should be dissolved. Senators Knox, of Pennsylvania, Republican, and Ashurst, of Arizona, Democrat, joined in the attack.

Senator Weeks, of Massachusetts, Republican, and Senators Lewis, of Illinois, Smith, of Georgia, and Reed of Missouri, Democrats, led in protests against the British embargo.

Sensor Weeks said that he did not charge that the embargo was aimed against the United States, but Senator Lewis remarked that a majority of articles listed are manufactured in the American Middle West. The Illinois senator said the action might bring on a trade war.

"I invite the attention of British officials to the delicate situation," he continued. "While the president is in France battling for the principles which our country finds necessary, one of our allies takes a course so inimical to the welfare of the United States that it is calculated to create a sentiment of hostility which will embarrass harmony in the United States."

Approving the view expressed in a pending resolution by Senator Weeks, asking the state department whether any steps have been taken leading to securing a modification, that the embargo violates the third of President Wilson's peace points against economic barriers, Senator Lewis added:

"Britain does this country a great violence at this time in pressing this embargo. It will awaken sentiment that will make it difficult for the president to succeed in his efforts and awaken hostility, create a war of protest and lead to retaliatory legislation by the United States, and before we know it we will have trade hostility. Instead of having the calm peace we wish, with our allies, we will have enmity instead of the peace we strive for."

In connection with discussion of the situation in Europe, Senator Reed referred to Pacific movements in France and England about six years ago, and declared the Carnegie foundation had branches in every country that were "jointly conspiring to control the policies of these countries."

Sensor Knox said, although the American people had expressed the opinion that they had a right to send countries vessels through the Panama Canal, without charge and through big political parties had imposed this policy, "this Carnegie peace organization spent \$25,000 or \$30,000 to circulate literature urging the repeal of the act conferring that right to shipping."

"I think the Pennsylvania Senator should have added," interrupted Senator Thomas, of Colorado, "that much of that fund was spent for the purpose of circulating a speech made in the Senate by Ethel Root in favor of the repeal of that act."

Sensor Ashurst declared that his party's failure to keep its pledge regarding that act had "done more to undermine confidence in the Democratic party than anything we ever did."

Sensor Knox stated that he believed the free trade question could have been amicably settled without repeal. After the United States proposed arbitration according to Senator Knox international shipping interests caused England to insist upon repeal of the law.

We know that many of our friends will find this good Sunday reading; and we should like to be listening to their comments. Instead they must read ours which will be brief and to the point. We have all been fed up on gushing sentiment about the reunion of the two great branches of the "Anglo-Saxon" race, chiefly from those who, a few years since, branded it as an evidence of treason to the Empire for "Anglo-Saxons" in Canada to propose "truck and trade" arrangements with the "Anglo-Saxons" of the States. And the same type of mind has made a silly attempt to treat the never-dying Irish question with amused indifference.

There is nothing more worthy the highest statesmanship than to take advantage of the sentiment begotten of the common purpose and common effort of the War to make permanent the good relations and cordial cooperation of the British Empire and the United States; and not for the sake of these countries alone but in the highest interests of world civilization.

The Foreign Relations Committee of the House of Representatives in Washington unanimously adopted a resolution to request the American representatives at the Peace Conference to endeavor to have the principle of self-determination applied to Ireland. This is a courageous, statesmanlike and consistent assertion of a principle avowed and acclaimed as one of the great issues for which the Great War was fought.

The foregoing news items show how tenuous a bond is that gushing sentiment already referred to, and how poor a substitute it is for statesmanship. But the gushers do not

hesitate to sneer at the statesmen. The Globe, for instance, thinks that after proclaiming the right of Ireland to determine her own destiny the Foreign Relations Committee should now intervene for self-determination, for the New York 'wets.'

When writing the following editorial squib one would think the Globe might realize that the Irish question is a bit too serious to be dismissed with cheap wit, or cheaper denunciation of Ireland's spokesmen:

"President Wilson still stands behind Secretary Daniels, who wants a navy for the United States that can lick creation. The road to world peace does not seem to be entirely free from obstacles."

The peace of the world depends very largely on the greatest of international questions—Ireland.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

BY THE GLEANER

When St. Peter tells us that the devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, perhaps some Catholics are tempted to suspect that the good saint is exaggerating a little, since their senses have never been witness to any such phenomenon; while unbelievers, who scoff at the idea of a personal devil, treat the whole matter as a myth concocted to frighten ignorant people. It is true that the sacred writer uses a figure of speech, and a very apt one. There is nothing in nature so suggestive of the idea of ferociousness and untiring energy in seeking his prey as a hungry man-eating lion, and no other comparison could give us a more adequate conception of the devil's unwearying activity and capacity in catching in his fangs the souls of men to feed the insatiable cravings of his hungry maw. Never perhaps was there a time when the devil was more active than at present. With the hellish sounds of war still echoing in our ears, with the despairing cries of women and children fleeing from impassioned mobs and the rancorous blasphemous shouts of the haters of religion and order reverberating throughout the world, it does not require any great stretch of the imagination to realize that the devil is going about like a roaring lion. A brief review of the past will, in the light of Catholic truth, make clear how he has gained such dominion over the souls of so many of our contemporaries.

Let us recall the lessons we learned in our Catechism. They afford the best solution to the riddle of "what's wrong with the world?" Satan's first triumph was in the garden of Eden. He poisoned human nature at its source. In addition to robbing us of supernatural life and the right to heaven, original sin darkened the understanding, weakened the will and left in us a strong inclination to evil. These latter defects remain, it is true, after original sin is forgiven, but not in the same degree of intensity in which they are found in the unregenerated soul. When Christ came to fulfill His mission of redemption and to crush the power of Satan, outside of that nation that looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and that drew supernatural aid from His anticipated merits, the great bulk of the human race was in the thrall of the powers of darkness. "Darkness covered the earth and a mist the people." But with the advent of the Sun of Justice "gentiles walked in His light and kings in the brightness of His rising." Ancient paganism, thoroughly alarmed, set itself the task of crushing the little Christian army. The blood of thousands of martyrs was the price of victory, but after three hundred years an emperor of mighty Rome was forced to cry out, "Thou has conquered, O pale Galilean!"

From the days of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of Rome, on down through the Middle Ages, saint and scholar, apostle and crusader led in extending the confines of Christianity; while the Clean Oblation and the Sacraments enlivened the faith and nourished the supernatural life of the Church. But there came a day when many of her children failed to perpetuate the pristine fervor of their forefathers and neglected to watch and pray lest they fall into temptation. The devil, ever alert, saw his opportunity. He used, as he had done in the days of Arise, the civil power to accomplish his end. The result was that a large portion of northern Europe separated from the See of Peter and lapsed into heresy. That these Protestant

sects have endured to our day is due to their having been fostered by the ruling powers in two great empires, and to the fact that they retained a large portion of revealed truth, the sacrament of Baptism and the heritage of Catholic tradition. All the sanctifying power that Protestantism exercises she received from the Catholic Church; while her only enduring literary monuments sprang from Catholic tradition. "It is our Catholic heritage of faith and sentiment," says Cardinal Newman, "that has inspired the sublimest passages in our Wordsworths and our Tennysons, our Longfellow and our Lowells."

Just as the flower plucked from the parent stem blooms and gives forth its sweet odor for a time but at last withers and decays, so it has been with Protestantism. It is now, if we may use the expression, a spiritual carcass, except in those places where the heaven of Catholicity has infused into it some spiritual life. The decomposition began in the land where it was founded and has now spread throughout the greater part of the body. In a word, we have in Germany and England of today, and to a lesser extent in their colonies, a neo-paganism that is lower in the scale than the paganism of ancient Greece and Rome or of modern China and Japan. These ancient religions, false though they were, had something dignified about them. They had a creed and a worship that prepared the way for Christianity, at least in as much as they proved that the idea of sacrifice to a superior being was inherent in the human race. The religion of the ancient Greeks and Romans was a positive cult. It has left behind enduring monuments of art and literature, while its philosophy was made a stepping stone to the preaching of the Gospel. It marked the apex of what reason unlightened by faith could do for man. But modern Protestantism has become a mere negation, without creed, without ritual, without worship. The devil has made a complete conquest—hence "The Twentieth Plane" and the ouija board. Is it any wonder that "darkness of the understanding, weakness of the will and a propensity to evil" are so manifest today? How manifest they are we will point out in a future issue.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THERE is a movement in Cuba to send young men to Canada to acquire proficiency in the English language. Here is a chance for our Catholic colleges to enlist a large student body of an interesting and desirable character, and, incidentally to promote intercourse with the Latin races of this hemisphere.

ONE of the important developments in ocean navigation arising out of the late War will be the equipment of great liners with seaplanes for expediting the delivery of their mail cargoes. It has been demonstrated that the use of seaplanes for this purpose is entirely feasible, and immediate adoption of the plan is likely to follow. By this means a liner when several hundred miles off the Irish coast could despatch its mail, and deliver same in London or other points twenty-four hours earlier than is possible by the present method.

ANOTHER important development in air as well as in ocean navigation will be the use of seaplanes in the case of wrecks or foundering, giving a new safeguard to ocean travel, and reducing the heavy annual toll of the sea. Its possibilities in this direction cannot be over estimated. How different for example might the Titanic affair have been, had the vessel been equipped with seaplanes! Their bulk, the space they would occupy on board ship, and their relatively small carrying capacity are of course serious problems, but in the light of developments of the past five years who would undertake to set a limit for the future. The world is yet in its infancy in the matter of air navigation.

THE LARGE place which the Berlin-Bagdad railway occupied in the War schemes of Germany and the great things promised to her Balkan and Asiatic allies are likely to be realized in a way not contemplated by the War Lords. A prominent official of the line has given it out that the railway will be completed to the Persian Gulf within two years, but it will not now, as intended, serve the political or strategic purposes of Germany. Al-

though there will be direct communication between Berlin and Bagdad the line will not pass through territory under German domination. Nor, according to the London Times Trade Supplement, will the Western terminus of the Asiatic portion be, as was contemplated, Haidar Pasha, on the Bosphorus, but at Alexandretta on the Mediterranean, which will be included in the new Arab dominions, and be under the protection of the Western Powers. So disappears another link in the German scheme of world-domination.

THE REV. R. J. CAMPBELL, the once much advertised oracle of the City Temple, London, who later startled the Nonconformist world by joining the Anglican Establishment, and has since kept pretty much out of the limelight, seems to be shaping for the termination of hostilities he preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey on what Catholics are accustomed to designate the "Glories of Mary." He called on the women of England to imitate the Virgin Mother in offering their sufferings for humanity at large, and dwelt upon the courage and the sacrifices of Mary and her conformity to the Divine Will. He failed of course to grasp the full significance of the Blessed Virgin's place in the Divine scheme of redemption, and deprived her of one of her supreme glories, her entire acquiescence in the Sacrifice of her Son, by a platitudinous remark to the effect that Mary had once entreated Our Lord to "give up all and come back to her." Nevertheless Mr. Campbell has travelled far since his City Temple days, and his Catholic friends will pray that he may still follow the "Kindly Light."

A NOTED figure in Catholic circles in England passed away in December last in the person of Count de Torre Diaz, President of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Of Spanish origin the Count was born in England, and was allied by marriage to some of the oldest Catholic families. His first wife was a Petre, and in her memory he erected the beautiful Lady Chapel of St. James Church, Spanish Place. His second wife, who survives him, is a sister of the Earl of Denbigh. His sister was the mother of Cardinal Merry del Val, Secretary of State to Pope Pius X. It is not his family alliances, however, which entitle him to remembrance so much as his life long devotion to works of charity and his preservation in his own person of the original spirit of St. Vincent de Paul. His works of charity are almost numberless: he was a constant friend to the poor and the distressed. In an age given up to the pursuit of pleasure and the worship of the material, Count de Torre Diaz was an outstanding example of a Catholic layman in high station, animated in all his works solely by love of God and zeal for the honor of His Church, R. I. P.

ALLUSION was made in these columns a month or two ago to the Polish Concentration Camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and to the excellent character maintained throughout by the troops which for the past two years have been assembling there and graduating therefrom to the Polish Legion in France. The announcement that the camp is to close before the end of the present month marks the termination of a noteworthy chapter in the history of the revived Polish nation and of the growth and development of the war spirit in Canada. Over 25,000 men have passed through this camp within the period named, and of these some 21,000 have crossed the Atlantic and taken their place on the fighting line in France. The 900 who still remain are soon to join their comrades and will be sent ultimately to Poland to take their part in restoring order in that much-tried land. Although the Niagara enterprise was initiated and maintained throughout by the Government of France, it was officered entirely by Canadians, which fact should not be overlooked in estimating Canada's contribution to the War.

IRELAND DEDICATES CEMETERY PLOT FOR AMERICAN MARTYRS

Washington, D. C.—The city corporation of Belfast, Ireland, has passed a resolution granting "to the American nation free of charge for all time," a large plot of ground in the City cemetery, where are buried thirty-four American soldiers, victims of influenza contracted on the trans-Atlantic voyage. The American plot