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Ralph Connor on the Northwest

School Question.

Rev. C. W. Gordon of Winnipeg, better known as 'Ralph Connor,' the most popular of Canadian authors, is a man who knows the West at first hand and is deeply interested in its welfare. In a letter written to the secretary of the Canadian Club of Toronto, and now published in the *Toronto Globe*, Mr. Gordon declares his strong opposition to the provision for separate schools in the Northwest Autonomy Bills now before Parliament. Mr. Gordon has been an ardent admirer of the present Premier of Canada, but finds it hard to understand how a man possessed of the ability, wisdom and justice with which he has hitherto credited Sir Wilfrid could consent to fastening on the Northwest a school system which, if suitable today, may not be at all suitable a generation hence. "I am the more surprised at Sir Wilfrid," writes Mr. Gordon, "because he has shown himself the champion of Provincial rights, and because especially he has shown himself superior to the influence of the clerical party in his Province. No one will doubt for a moment that this legislation is proposed simply because a certain section of our people fear that the interests of their church will be adversely affected in the creation of the new Provinces. It does seem a strange thing that the Territories, which have during all their past history dealt in a manner perfectly satisfactory to the Roman Catholics with the school question, should not be trusted to deal with equal fairness with that church in the future; and, while none of us would for a moment approve of interfering with the secular and religious rights of our fellow-citizens, I feel sure that it is in keeping with the genius of western Canada, and with its intensely democratic spirit, that Provinces should be allowed to work out their own destiny, and should have the fullest control of their internal affairs. The parallels cited by Sir Wilfrid failed to apply simply because they are not parallels. I cannot tell you how deeply I am disappointed in our Premier, a man who has been to me, throughout his whole career, my ideal of a Canadian statesman, but I cannot help feeling that in this instance he has allowed his judgment to be clouded and his mind to be disturbed from its wonted equable poise by the undue influence of a bigoted and sectarian group of his followers. . . . I am quite convinced that this step of Sir Wilfrid's is a step backwards, one entirely opposed to the spirit and genius of the western people. It is quite possible that, owing to party influence, no agitation may take place. It is also possible that the legislation may be hurried through, so as to prevent effective protest, but all the same, to my mind, it will be a calamity. I am glad to see that Sifton and the western men in Parliament are standing up for Provincial rights. The rest will back them up."

National Rights—

Who Shall

Determine Them?

Theodore Roosevelt was formally inaugurated President of the United States on the fourth of March. In the course of his inaugural address President Roosevelt said: "Much has been given to us, and much will rightfully be expected from us. We have duties to others and duties to ourselves—and we can shirk neither. We have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as becomes a people with such responsibilities. Toward all other nations, large and small, our attitude must be one of cordial and sincere friendship. We must show not only in our words but in our deeds that we are earnestly desirous of securing their good-will by acting toward them in a spirit of just and generous recognition of all their rights. But justice and generosity in a nation, as in an individual, count most when shown not by the weak but by the strong. While ever careful to refrain from wronging others, we must be no less insistent that we are not wronged ourselves. We wish peace, but we wish the peace of justice, the peace of righteousness. We wish it because we think it is right and not because we are afraid. No weak nation that acts rightly and justly should ever have cause to fear us, and no strong power should ever be able to single us out as a subject for insolent aggression." These are characteristically forceful words and we have no wish to question their general sincerity. Probably Mr. Roosevelt would not care to endorse the saying of a late United States Senator to the effect that the Golden Rule as applied to

politics is an iridescent dream. But it is evident that the President does not hold the opinion that his nation in dealing with other nations can afford to be guided by the Sermon on the Mount. There is no turning of the other cheek in his doctrine of international politics. Probably President Roosevelt's doctrine in this matter is quite as high in regard to morality as that of other nations. He puts it rather more frankly than some others would do, perhaps—that is all. It is a very admirable doctrine to teach that the United States should evince an earnest desire to secure the good will of other nations "by acting toward them in a spirit of just and generous recognition of all their rights." The President does not however say by whom the question of other nations' rights should be interpreted. If it is his own nation, and it is represented—not even by its "judges of repute" but by its practical politicians, which is to decide this important question, then no doubt the United States Senate will agree with the President.

The Zemsky

Zobor.

Probably many persons who have seen the phrase "Zemsky Zobor," so frequently appearing of late in dispatches concerning Russian affairs, have wondered what it meant. The phrase itself contains nothing intelligible to the ordinary English reader and the correspondents employing it have not for the most part seen fit to give much explanation of its meaning. The reader has been able to gather perhaps that the Zemsky Zobor was some kind of a representative assembly which formerly existed in Russia and which it was hoped the Czar would be persuaded to revive, but as to its character he has been left in the dark. Concerning this ancient institution the *Montreal Witness* says:—"In its origin the Zemsky Zobor was similar to that of the Witensagomote, or great council of the Saxons, which developed in England into representative parliamentary institutions, but in Russia was strangled and finally suppressed by the autocracy. Down to the time of Peter the Great, the Zemsky Zobor was the law-making power, the grand dukes of Moscow and their successors, the Czars, having the right of veto, the same as the President of the United States now has over acts of Congress. As a matter of historical fact, as a recent Russian writer has shown, all important legislation emanated from the Zemsky Zobor and was approved by the sovereign. The codes of 1497, or 1550 and of 1649, which form the foundations of Russian substantive law, were enacted by the Zemsky Zobor and approved in this way. The Romanoff dynasty was elected to the throne by a vote of the Zemsky Zobor just as the house of Hanover was placed on the British throne by Act of Parliament. During the whole of the seventeenth century the Zemsky Zobor was regularly evoked. It opposed the reforming policy of Peter the Great, who, by a 'coup d'etat,' substituted for it a legislative body of his own appointment and obedient to his will, which he called the Senate, and which still performs its functions as he defined them. Objection by the conservatives to the revival of the Zemsky Zobor is based on the assertion that the Russian people are incapable of making laws for the government of the empire. That may be true of the depressed peasantry of today, but a people who hundreds of years ago were capable of exercising this power can hardly have degenerated into hopeless incapacity. If they have, the fact is the strongest condemnation possible of the autocratic system."

The Battle of

Mukden.

The great battle between the Japanese and Russian armies in Manchuria, which had been in progress for several days when our note on the situation last week was written, has continued during the week, and with increasing disaster to the Russian arms. The armies of the Czar, though occupying strongly entrenched positions, have been forced back before the advance of the Japanese under the masterly generalship of Field-Marshal Oyama. Mukden has been abandoned and the Russian General has again been compelled to seek safety for his army in retreat. The extent of the disaster which General Kuropatkin has suffered is not yet fully known. He has withdrawn his scattered forces northward, and has suffered heavy losses in supplies, ammunition and artillery. The Pass which the retreating General's objective, and this he has probably succeeded in reaching, but in a crippled condition. According to Japanese accounts the Russian losses in killed and wounded amount to 90,000 and 40,000 have been taken prisoners. If this statement is

correct it appears that as a result of the last great battle one-third or more of the men of General Kuropatkin's army have been put hors du combat. The Japanese also report the capture of two ensigns, sixty guns, sixty thousand rifles, 105 ammunition wagons, 1000 army wagons, 2000,000 shells, 25,000,000 shots for rifles, 74,000 bushels of grain, a large quantity of railway material, 2,000 horses and a large quantity of feed for horses, considerable quantities of bread and 150,000,000 pounds of fuel. As the Japanese report the capture of only 63 guns, it is inferred that General Kuropatkin succeeded in getting away with most of his heavy artillery. The Japanese report casualties on their side aggregating a little more than 47,000, but this is not a full report, and anything like an exact statement of the losses on either side will not be obtainable for some days. It is impossible as yet to say what the outcome of the great battle will be. If Kuropatkin has been able to reach The Pass with two-thirds of his army and most of his artillery he may be able to make a successful stand there for a time. But this is uncertain. Military experts appear to be of the opinion that Marshal Oyama will immediately follow up his victory with an attack upon the Pass, and that the Russians in their present condition will not be able to resist the attack. In that case Kuropatkin will if possible retreat to Harkin, leaving Manchuria virtually in the possession of the Japanese. What effect the battle will have in bringing peace nearer remains to be seen. The voice of the Czar and his advisors is still for war. But the voice of the Russian people however inarticulate, is no longer to be disregarded, and if their temper is strongly opposed to the continuance of this bootless war, the Czar may deem it the part of discretion to call halt.

The Autonomy

Bills

So far there has been no notice of amendments to the school clauses of the Autonomy Bills which were introduced a fortnight ago by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the House of Commons. It is reported, however, that an agreement has been reached in the matter that will be generally satisfactory to the Government's supporters in Parliament, and that an amendment embodying this agreement will probably be introduced very shortly. What the nature of this agreement is the public is not yet informed. It would seem however that it is likely to be of the nature of a compromise, and it is to be feared that it will perpetuate in some form the principle of sectarian schools in the constitutions of the new Provinces. The Northwest members are, it appears, willing to accept a compromise which, while it will eliminate some of the more objectionable features of the school clauses, will nevertheless perpetuate in the Provincial constitutions the separate school system as it now exists in the Territories. There is good evidence, however, that such an arrangement would be contrary to the wishes of the great majority of the people now in the Territories. The people of the Northwest may be willing for the time being to continue it indefinitely, but they do not want any such system forced upon them forever by having it made a feature of the Provincial constitutions. And in this they stand upon the ground of common right and justice. It is the inherent right of these prospective commonwealths, soon to have within their bounds millions of people, to control their own educational systems, and the Dominion Parliament, with or without the consent of the Northwest members, has no right to fetter their free action in a matter of so great and far-reaching importance. As it is the right and fair thing to leave the prospective Provinces untrammelled in regard to their educational work, so also it will be, as we believe, a matter of political wisdom for the present Government and the Liberal party to pursue that course.

Low Diet for

Strength.

According to Dr. Russell H. Chittenden of the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University, the people who can afford only the tougher kinds of meat, and not too much of that, may be better off, so far as health and strength are concerned, than those who are able to supply themselves with the tenderest and choicest portions. Dr. Chittenden says that strength tests show that the men who cut down their diet to about one-third of their ordinary consumption have increased in strength from 35 to 100 per cent. in every case. He told the Sheffield School men not to drink milk at the same time they ate meat, because the milk, he said, showed a tendency to collect in little hard, indigestible masses when brought into contact with meat. He recommended that either be taken to the exclusion of the other. He announced also that tough meat, if ground first, as in the case of round steak, was fully as nutritious as tender meat. In the same lecture Dr. Chittenden advised cutting down the food consumption and recommended the Yale boys to imitate the Japs, who eat to live and do not make their dinners their highest pleasure.