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LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 29, 1917

### UNPRECEDENTED POLITICAL SITUATION

"There are, moments in history when by the urgency of circumstance everyone in a country is drawn from normal pursuits to consider the affairs of the nation."

"Irishmen can no longer afford to remain aloof from each other, or to address each other distantly or defiantly from press or platform, but must strive to understand each other truly, and to give due weight to each other's opinions, and, if possible arrive at a compromise, a balancing of their diversities, which may save our country from anarchy and chaos for generations to come." From "Thoughts for a Convention," a Memorandum on the State of Ireland, by George W. Russell (A. E.).

This solemn and statesmanlike appeal, by the able and patriotic young Ulsterman to his fellow-countrymen of all classes, creeds and political views in Ireland, has a peculiar fitness in its application to Canada to-day. Indeed, this famous Memorandum is pervaded by a spirit which is sorely needed amongst Canadians who lead public thought and govern public action. Nor do we believe this spirit is lacking; just in proportion as it permeates public sentiment, enters into the direction of public affairs, and dominates the leaders of thought and action will the future destiny of Canada be wisely and safely guided.

In the opinion of many, the result of the election is the greatest thing that has happened in Canadian history; others may look upon it as a disaster. Few will deny that it is a most important event in the history of Canada, and that it creates a situation calling for wise, prudent and firm statesmanship. We propose to look facts and conditions squarely in the face, and to discuss the situation with our readers honestly and fearlessly. Those so weakly sensitive as to resent anything but an echo of their own opinions, may not like it. But the CATHOLIC RECORD is for grown men and women.

A retrospective glance at the political history of Canada is necessary if we would understand the present, or forecast the future intelligently.

Long before Confederation the dominating political power of the French Canadians was recognized by so astute and farseeing a politician as Sir John A. Macdonald. Sir Joseph Pope, the authorized biographer of Canada's great Prime Minister, says:

"Ever since his acquaintance with public affairs Mr. Macdonald had been alive to the impossibility of carrying on a Government against which the French Canadians were unitedly opposed. . . . The general election of 1847-48 confirms him in this view, and thenceforward he was more than ever careful to cultivate friendly relations with the French party."

After Confederation, as every one with the slightest knowledge of our political history knows, the conciliation of the French vote ever remained a cardinal principle of Sir John Macdonald's policy. It was by and with their almost unanimous support that he maintained his long tenure of leadership in Canadian public life. During the greater part of this time Catholics elsewhere also supported the Conservative party, having been driven into this political affiliation by George Brown's violent and virulent anti-Catholic attitude, rather than by any attraction exercised by their co-religionists of Quebec. To quote Sir Joseph Pope once more: "The alliance once contracted, eventually begot mutual obligations; for it must not be forgotten that, if Sir John Macdonald stood by the Roman Catholics, they stood by him."

All during this time, even in a generation which knew not George Brown, nor the Globe of George Brown's day, a large and growing part of the English population found the domination of Canada by Quebec

become increasingly irksome. It was quite natural, it was quite human that influences within the Liberal party should seek to foment and deepen this feeling of resentment, until on the retirement of Edward Blake, the Liberal party acquired a French Canadian leader. A short time afterwards Canada was in the throes of one of those racial and religious disputes which from time to time threaten the stability of Confederation—the Manitoba school question. Here the Conservative party—whether sincerely or not doesn't matter—true to its traditions, adopted as its public policy the solution acceptable to the Quebec hierarchy, who in turn issued a joint *Mandement* to be read in all the churches in support of the Conservative policy. Laurier, the French Canadian Catholic leader of the Liberals, repudiated coercion, and advocated conciliation and compromise. That this policy should be endorsed by the English-speaking provinces was to be expected; but that Quebec, against the unanimous and solemn charge of hierarchy and clergy, should pronounce overwhelmingly in its favor was one of the most astounding things that had as yet occurred in the history of Canadian politics. Certain Protestants, with the obtuseness on such matters characteristic of their type, joyously predicted the immediate defection of Quebec from the Church. In reality the explanation is simple. It was the first public and striking expression of French Canadian nationalism, as yet without a name, politically formless and void; but even at this time a plant of vigorous growth rooted in race and language and circumscribed within these narrow limits. To prevent any unwarranted inference here, we wish to state emphatically that to this narrow nationalist sentiment Laurier never appealed. No one realized more keenly the evil possibilities of nationalism; no one so feared its menace to civil and religious peace. But this French Canadian vote for Laurier and against the bishops marked the end of an old chapter in Canadian political history and the beginning of a new. In one respect, however, conditions were the same: the representation from Quebec was again overwhelmingly on the side of the Government, and so remained until in 1911 the Conservative-Nationalist alliance succeeded in dividing the province.

One or two other outstanding political events deserve passing mention. In certain eastern counties of Ontario, French Canadians from the adjoining province had long been quietly supplanting the English speaking people. No one will deny the absolute right of Canadians of French origin to migrate to any part of any province in Canada. But the English fell back before this French invasion because of the difficulty over schools. This difficulty we wish to state quite dispassionately. We shall merely recite the facts. Catholics and Protestants of the same language can agree to support and maintain a common school. As a matter of fact about 40 per cent, chiefly in rural sections, of the Catholics of Ontario have only such mixed schools. The case is different when two languages have to be taught. The regularly trained and qualified teachers of the province of Ontario are not competent to conduct such schools. Hence French speaking teachers are given special permission to take charge of them. In addition to the handicap of attempting to teach two languages in the short school life of the ordinary child, these teachers by reason of lack of training are, in too many instances, unable to teach satisfactorily English, French, or anything else. We need not enlarge upon the subject. What actually takes place is that the English speaking people, Catholic as well as Protestant, keenly desirous of a good elementary education for their children, sell their farms and move elsewhere. Their places are taken by French Canadians. While our French Canadian friends complain so bitterly and so noisily of injustice and Prussianism, the cold fact is that through the medium of the schools, they have driven the English people from the land their fathers cleared, and from the homes they made. This condition of things attracted no widespread attention until about 1885. In 1886 the province of Ontario went through a general electoral campaign in which this was the chief issue. As usual, the French language and people were confounded with the Catholic Church.

And although these schools in Prescott and Russell over which the trouble arose were Public schools—not Separate schools, but Public schools—the issue developed into an anti-Separate school campaign with the most inflammatory appeals to religious passion and prejudice.

Ten years later in the federal election of 1896 the Manitoba school question—where again the French language was at the bottom of the difficulty—was thrust into the federal arena and all Canada was convulsed by an electoral campaign of a similar nature. In all these politico-religious wars between Quebec and the rest of the Dominion the Catholics of the English provinces were always the chief sufferers. They were the Belgians, nor received neither the sympathy, nor the understanding that goes out to that unhappy people.

We have outlined some of the reasons why the two great races in Canada have drifted so far apart that they have begun to regard each other with feelings of suspicion, distrust and antagonism. Other causes are so recent that a bare mention will suffice. The failure of French Canadians to enlist in due proportion during the War; the defiance of school laws and regulations, the arrogant flouting of constituted authority on the part of the bilingualists in Ottawa and elsewhere; the rioting and disorders in Montreal, and innumerable other like incidents brought the deep-rooted racial antagonism to a dangerously acute stage. In such circumstances the general election came on; it was almost inevitable that the electoral campaign should have taken the course it did. It has happily passed without having degenerated into a campaign dividing Canadians along religious lines, although it has resulted in dividing the country practically along racial lines. This constitutes a danger to Canada, but it may lead to a vast improvement on the state of things that has hitherto obtained if those who direct thought and form sentiment in Quebec as well as in the English speaking provinces measure up to the responsibilities imposed upon them.

Let us again quote A. E. His advice to Irishmen is equally applicable to Canadians at this time:

"Nothing was ever gained in life by hatred; nothing good ever came of it or could come of it; and the first and most important of all the commandments of the spirit, that there should be brotherhood between men will be deliberately broken to the ruin of the spiritual life of Ireland."

We may hope that in Canada at this time the voices of hatred will be stilled; that the message of peace and good will and mutual understanding will find a permanent lodgment in the hearts and minds of all Canadians. We have the firm belief that Sir Wilfred Laurier—one who will grudge him this truthful tribute now—whose whole life has been dominated by the desire to bring French Canadians and English Canadians closer together in sympathetic understanding, mutual good will and cordial cooperation, will accomplish, all the more effectively in defeat, the purpose of his life by pointing the way to those of his own race, and to Canadians of other origins whom he understands and loves, the way that will lead to a united Canada free from racial strife.

Catholics of English speech who support their French Canadian co-religionists, right or wrong, will contribute no more to this desired end than those whose opposition is dictated by anti-Catholic prejudice.

### THE RT. REV. DR. FALLON'S LETTER TO THE PRESS

During the last week of the election campaign no subject was more widely discussed than Bishop Fallon's letter to the press on the issues then awaiting the verdict of the people. No speech, no address of any of the leaders, no other election document received such widespread, such universal publicity; there was no paper of any standing in Canada that did not carry the letter in full. In addition it was printed and circulated by hundreds of thousands, it was quoted or referred to from every platform. Naturally amidst the chorus of eulogistic references to the writer there was heard occasionally a discordant note; but the adverse criticism was surprisingly small.

Now why did he write the letter? Why did His Lordship risk incurring the odium and misrepresentation inseparable from political controversy during the heat of an election campaign?

Those who know him personally—and he is very widely known—no

matter how rudely the letter clashed with their political convictions; no matter how it jarred their hopes or even political aspirations; would do him the justice of believing that he had grave and sufficient reasons for his intervention in politics; and that his motive was high minded and unselfish. Those who know him by reputation would, in a greater or less degree, come to the same conclusions; those who know him by misrepresentation only would find in the letter, as they have found in his every utterance and act, justification for their abuse.

It is well to remember that Bishop Fallon is not only a widely travelled man, but that he dwelt for many years in foreign countries on close and intimate terms with men, few or many, who typified their civilization and outlook. Few Americans know so thoroughly their great Republic, or count therein more friends and intimate relationships. Naturally and necessarily, this experience must modify his views, must broaden his vision of world affairs, and tend to make him see Canadian interests in their relation to the rest of the Empire and to the world.

The War he foresaw as inevitable. On two different occasions, in striking terms, he predicted it. When it came he was fully seized of its tremendous bearing on Christian civilization. From the beginning he was an earnest, zealous, anxious advocate of the prosecution of the War to a successful issue. He realized as few others could realize the disastrous moral effect which an adverse vote for Union Government would have on the United States. He knew how whole heartedly and strenuously his personal friends, Cardinal Gibbons, Cardinal O'Connell and that great Archbishop and great American, John Ireland, (and countless others) were devoting their energies and influence to the great task of mobilizing for war the moral resources of America. Rightly or wrongly his conviction was profound that the defeat of conscription in Canada would seriously embarrass the United States. He knew, as all know, that it would bring discouragement to our friends and joy to our enemies.

But there were other reasons, compelling reasons why he should intervene. It has been the unvarying experience of Canadian political history that the public mind played upon by unscrupulous anti-Catholic bigots always confounded and confused the politics of Quebec with the Catholic religion. The electoral campaign had already narrowed down to the question: Shall Quebec rule the Dominion? Shall that province which refused to do its share in the War dominate the Government which will control Canada's future War activities? And so on. The next step inevitably would have been that "the vile and indefensible anti-Catholic propaganda," already initiated, should become widespread, general; and this in spite of the decent and patriotic elements in the Union party. Privately Liberals and Conservatives in the new party deplored this probable turn of affairs; they expressed their reprobation of such contemptible political tactics in terms at once sincere and vigorous. The foul storm was gathering; it was about to break. Indeed, we have been privately assured on authority we do not question that tons of anti-Catholic literature had already been prepared; mountebank pulpsters had their stink-pots ready for the holy war. Mr. N. W. Rowell had signified his willingness to act as godfather while the bastard offspring of alleged religion and freedom received the euphemistic name—Anti-clerical.

Then came the Bishop's letter, fearless, honest, transparently sincere. The menace to civil and religious peace was averted. The campaign closed, and instead of the old wound in the body politic of Canada being deepened and envenomed afresh, the festering sore was healed.

Once again, and let us hope finally and decisively, Bishop Fallon has demonstrated to the Canadian people, Catholic and Protestant alike, that the politics of Quebec are not the dogmas of the Catholic Church; and that Catholics of other origins while ready to bear the consequences of their own mistakes, shortcomings and sins, will not permit a mistaken and unfounded public opinion to embroil them in every race and language dispute of their French Canadian co-religionists. Nor, while conceding to Quebec its full rights of self-government, civil and eccles-

istical, will they, any more than their Protestant fellow citizens, permit Quebec to dictate their course of action in matters civil, educational or religious. Too long have Catholics suffered from this confusion not to appreciate the immense service that Bishop Fallon has rendered in clearing it up. Protestants of good will—they are many and may their tribe increase—will be equally grateful. The only ones who will be really and permanently disgruntled and dissatisfied with the Bishop's letter are those ministers who, having long since exhausted the possibilities of the Gospel of Christ, will now have to find or invent new arguments when preaching on their favorite and inexhaustible theme—"ROME."

We have said that the adverse criticism received by Bishop Fallon was surprisingly small. We speak with knowledge. We have read or heard read some scores of the letters and telegrams that cover His Lordship's desk. Apart from a few anonymous letters which of course found their way to the waste basket as soon as their anonymity was discovered, there were not half a dozen unfavorable criticisms. The number of leading men in all walks of life who expressed their appreciation is as surprising as it is gratifying. No doubt there were Catholic Liberals who were not pleased; but dozens of letters from prominent Catholic Liberals, not only from Ontario but from the other provinces (not even excluding Quebec), revealed the fact that the need for such a pronouncement was keenly felt by Catholic Liberals, whether they had joined the Union party or not. It is only on feeling the profound sense of relief and gratitude expressed in these letters, written by Catholics widely separated by conditions of life as well as by distance, that one realizes how deep was the need of the Bishop's outspoken words and how great is the service they rendered.

The first message received by Bishop Fallon on the morning of the publication of the letter came over the long distance telephone from one of the most prominent Catholic business men of Canada. "I am a Liberal," he said, "but I cannot wait for the mail to carry you my heartfelt appreciation of the service you have rendered to Catholics in particular, and to the whole country as well. I thank God for it. Believe me, Bishop Fallon, there are many Catholics thanking God and praying for you."

No, as we recall it now, the first message came from a prominent Catholic Liberal in the city of London. It was a most eloquently concise summary of the Catholic view of the letter so far as it particularly affected Catholics. It consisted of five words: "You have drawn their fangs."

Singularly enough one of the earliest expressions of opinion came from the driver of the grocery wagon while delivering supplies to the Bishop's kitchen: "I'm a Grit; but no matter which way the election goes Bishop Fallon has cleared the air for Catholics; and believe me it was beginning to smell bad." This remark called forth the comment that what ever their disadvantages or limitations might be, we can trust the proverbial intelligence of our Irish Catholic people.

A leading Catholic Liberal with political aspirations and ambitions of his own telegraphed the one word: "Magnificent."

One facetious individual remarked that the amount of anti-Catholic "literature" scrapped must have materially relieved the fuel shortage. But space forbids us to continue. We have just a word to add. Had Bishop Fallon's appeal had no other effect than to prevent, to make impossible, the threatened anti-Catholic campaign, it would have rendered a service to Catholics, and to Protestants also, worthy of the grateful remembrance of a generation of Canadians; and that service it would have rendered even if the election had gone as overwhelmingly the other way.

But in that case just think of the shame and blame that would have come to the Bishop; even, yes especially, from jeering Catholics; imagine the storm of obloquy that would have broken over his head. It could be equalled only by the shame that would have overwhelmed his own secret soul had he shrunk from speaking the word that his conscience and judgment imperatively bade him speak.

That took moral courage.

### THE HALIFAX DISASTER AND DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The theologian of the Toronto Globe has written an editorial on the recent catastrophe at Halifax, in which he essays to vindicate the ways of God to man. It affords a striking illustration of what little consolation Protestant teaching can afford in the face of suffering and death, and furthermore of the hazy conception in the non-Catholic mind of the relation of God to his creatures.

"It is impossible," he says, "to avoid asking whether there is any providential care at all or whether things are left to chance or inexorable law. If, say many, we are children of a gracious and loving Father, why should these things be? Unbelief settles the question at once by saying there is no God, but this is an impossible position. Many go to the other extreme and are inclined to see in a great disaster the proof that there is a God Who brings calamity on account of exceptional sin. But this theory also breaks down in the face of facts, for there are no moral distinctions in the case of shipwreck or explosion. The man who is godly perishes with the man who never thinks of God." In solution of the difficulty the writer quotes some principles laid down by Bruce in his book "The Providential Order," but concludes that it must be confessed that from the merely intellectual point of view not much comfort can be drawn in relation to individuals. Christ, he says, never once discusses the subject from its purely rational side. It would, he thinks, be little consolation to the individual that the race might benefit through the experience of disaster, nor does he believe that the hope of future glory will bring much balm to wounded hearts. There is, he concludes, no consolation except in faith, hope and love. In fellowship with God in Christ the heart can trust until "the day dawn and the shadows flee away."

Now let us apply the acid test of Catholic teaching to this particular circumstance. God certainly foresaw (if we may use this word in reference to One to Whom all things past and future are ever present) that, on that eventful morning of Dec. 6th, 1917, the Imo and the Mont Blanc would collide in Halifax harbor. Moreover, the catastrophe happened with at least His permission; for nothing happens that He does not will or permit. If it were due to a deliberate crime on the part of some one, He could not prevent that crime, for to do so would be to interfere with man's free will. He could, however, have prevented its consequences, just as He could prevent an accidental cause from having its effect. Why He permitted the disaster is not for us to judge. It is sufficient for us to know that all things, even sin itself, work together for good in His providential plan.

The point, however, to emphasize is this. By allowing this calamity to occur no injustice was done to anyone. It is true that many lives were lost; but God is the Master of life and death, and as He gave us life and preserves us in that life, He can take it away at whatever time or in whatever manner He pleases. If people are not prepared to die it is their own fault, for they have been warned to be always ready as they know not the day nor the hour. People were deprived of their property and left penniless, but in this there is no injustice on God's part, for what we have belongs to Him. He has given us our earthly possessions and He can take them away. We may have labored, we may have sown, but God gave us the power to labor and God gave the increase. Suffering came to thousands, but suffering, while in itself an evil, can be turned to man's greater good either in atonement for past sins or as a source of future reward. Thus we see that even in those cases where God sends a calamity in order to punish sin, no injustice is done the innocent who suffer alike with the wicked.

Is it true that Christ has never discussed this subject from its purely rational side? Has He not pointed to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air and asked if He has care of them how much more of His intelligent creatures? Has He not reasoned that if a mother will not forget her infant surely He who implanted that mother love in her breast will not forget His children, and that if He sends them suffering it is because He wishes them to be sharers in His cross? "Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth and He scourgeth every son that He receiveth."

We admit with the writer that there is little consolation for the individual sufferer in the consideration that the race may benefit from the experience of disaster. But we must remember that creation is not a collection of isolated beings but a united whole, and that God, while not unmindful of the individual, has in view the general welfare of the race. We admit also that if future glory be, as it is unfortunately conceived by many, "a far-off, vague, uncertain, ethereal heaven" the hope of obtaining it offers little present comfort. The writer is correct in stating that the only solution is in faith, hope and love. The trouble is that those words mean so little to the ordinary man or woman outside the Church today. May God grant an increase of those virtues to the poor stricken people of Halifax to console them in their hour of trial.

THE GLEANER

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

A CHURCH spire carried through the air, and dropped intact in a vacant lot two miles away—such was one of the extraordinary effects of the appalling explosion at Halifax.

THE PROPOSAL to turn the ruined cathedral of Rheims into a sort of national pantheon, has been strongly denounced by Cardinal Lucien, Archbishop of that city, who, true shepherd of his flock as he is, has remained at the post of duty throughout all the vicissitudes of the War. "We will repair the cathedral," declares His Eminence, "because it is necessary. The cathedral in which the first Christian king of France was baptized, must remain the first in rank of all French churches."

DR. LANGLET, mayor of Rheims, who has shared with the Archbishop the post of danger, supports him in this matter also. "When the War has ended its work of death," he has said, "life must return into the temple where the infancy of our life was spent. The cathedral will remain for Catholics the most beautiful sanctuary of worship, which is assured of respect, even by the law of separation of Church and State." M. Louis Bonner, chief inspector of the architectural department of Paris, has also condemned the project, contending that the burial of thousands of corpses within the cathedral precincts is an unthinkable thing, and that the countless inscriptions upon the walls of the sacred edifice which this would entail would deface even the ruins beyond hope of redemption.

THE AWFUL ruin and desolation left in the track of the invading Huns of the fourth and fifth centuries, over the very ground ravaged by the Huns of today, has never been more graphically described than by Cardinal Newman in the "Rise and Progress of Universities," forming the major part of volume 8 of his "Historical Sketches." The whole book will repay reading by those who, familiar as they are with the term "Huns" as applied to the Prussian armies of to-day, are perhaps less familiar with the history of their prototypes of a bygone age. We can merely allude to it here, and quote a brief paragraph or two as typical of the sketch throughout.

AT THAT time, writes Newman, "the banks of the Rhine are said to have been lined with villas and farms; the schools of Marseilles, Autun and Bordeaux vied with those of the East, and even with that of Athens. . . . At the time that Alaric was carrying his ravages from Greece into Lombardy, the fierce Burgundians and other Germans to the number of 200,000 fighting men, fell upon Gaul, and to use the words of a well-known historian, the scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert, and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the work of man." "That which the palmer worm left," to use the Cardinal's phrase, "the locust ate; and what the locust left, the mildew destroyed." How like ravaged Flanders of to-day.

WRITING OF Asia Minor and the Balkans, Newman thus summarizes the work of the Goths: "Down they came from Prussia, Poland and the Crimea; they sailed along the Euxine, ravaged Pontus and Bithynia, sacked the wealthy Trebizond and Chalcedon and burned the imperial Nicæa and Nicomedia, and other great cities of the country; then they fell upon Cyzicus and the cities on the coast, and finally demolished the