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## Current Topics

### AT HOME AND ABROAD.

FOR some years past there has been strong and bitter opposition to the Catholic Indian mission schools in the United States, and persistent attempts have been made to induce the Government to withdraw the grants in aid which these schools have for many years received. This ignoble crusade has at last succeeded and the American Senate has finally decided to withdraw Government support from all denominational schools. The history of the matter is interesting as showing that there is absolutely no other ground for the opposition than pure and unadulterated bigotry. In 1878 the United States Government first inaugurated the policy of co-operation with religious denominations in the care of the Indians, and the policy was welcomed with every manifestation of approval, and even of rejoicing, by the various sects. The Protestant churches built the first Indian contract school and for two years after this policy was adopted not a single Catholic school was engaged in the education of the Indian children. But in 1880 the Government made the first provision for contracts for the education of these children in schools under Catholic control and with characteristic energy and zeal Catholics set to work to establish schools. When they began to apply for their share of the appropriations the policy which had been so warmly commended soon began to be denounced. But when in 1885 it was found that the Catholics were actually getting three-fourths of the total appropriations, because they had built the schools at the invitation of the Government, a perfect howl was raised throughout the country to abolish sectarian education, and it has continued ever since. An organisation called the Indian Rights Association was formed, not, as might be supposed, to provide educational advantages for the neglected Indian but to carry on a fierce crusade against the Catholic schools. As we have said this crusade has been at last successful, and the other week the Senate passed a resolution declaring it to be the settled policy of Government hereafter to make no appropriations whatever for education in any sectarian school. It is an altogether ignoble victory, and one which reflects anything but credit on those who have achieved it. As the members of the Indian Rights Association well know, the Government cannot immediately provide schools of its own or dispense with Catholic teachers, but these members are willing rather to see the Indian children turned loose upon the prairies and abandoned to savagery than that they should be cared for by Catholic missionaries. Little wonder that the attitude and action of the association in this matter should have called forth from an indignant Senator this stinging rebuke:—"So this association to-day is anxious about the rights and privileges of the Indians; yet because those Indians happened to believe the doctrines of the Catholic Church, they would drive them from the schools, turn them loose on the prairies, and make no provision for them whatever. Mr. President, I am tired of the contemptible hypocrisy of the Indian Rights Association. I am sorry that it finds representation on this floor. While it may contain many philanthropic and excellent people its affairs are controlled and directed by persons who have no respect not only for the interests of the Indians but in many cases for truth itself."

### THE SITUATION IN FRANCE.

It was hoped that the old virulent anti-clerical spirit was somewhat on the wane in France but recent developments in connection with the Brest election have evoked an outburst which shows how vain and mistaken was that hope. A short time ago, it will be remembered, a vacancy occurred in the representation of the Brest electorate through the death of Mgr. D'Hulst who had so long and so brilliantly represented the constituency in the French Chamber. There was great difficulty in securing a suitable Catholic candidate but after much delay the Abbé Gayraud consented to stand and was accepted as the Catholic candidate for the constituency. The Abbé stood, it should be said, as a Republican both by conviction and as

being faithful to the directions given by the Sovereign Pontiff who, as everybody knows, has advised the French Catholics to accept and acknowledge the Republic and make the best use they can of it on constitutional lines. During the election campaign the grossest calumnies were circulated with reference to the Abbé Gayraud but he was able to refute them all and when the voting took place he was victorious by a very large majority over his opponents. The virulence of his enemies still pursued him, however, and the latest development is an attempt to have the election invalidated on the ground of the interference of the clergy in matters political and the undue influence brought to bear upon the electors at Brest. A motion demanding that an inquiry be held into the circumstances attending the election of the Abbé Gayraud was proposed in the French Chamber, and we give one specimen of the kind of reasoning by which the above mentioned charges were attempted to be proved. During the election, said a hostile deputy, it was announced that the candidature of the Abbé Gayraud had received the formal approbation of the Pope (a charge which, we may say, the Abbé proved later on to be absolutely untrue). If, proceeded the deputy, this statement was true it constituted unwarrantable interference on the part of the clergy and of the Pope. If it was not true, the effect which the fiction would have on the minds of the Brest electors amounted to undue influence. Unfortunately the Catholic Monarchists in the Chamber, who were exasperated beyond all measure with the Abbé Gayraud for professing Republican principles, united with the anti-clerical Republicans with the result that the motion ordering an inquiry was carried by an overwhelming majority, 339 voting in its favour and only 112 against. It was moreover decided that a virulent and inflammatory anti-clerical speech, delivered by M. Hénot, deputy for Quimper, should be placarded all over the country. The whole incident is deeply significant and seems to indicate that a return to the very worst days of the anti-clerical spirit in France is a by no means remote contingency.

### THE EDUCATION QUESTION IN CANADA.

FOR some time past the Manitoban schools question has been the subject of discussion and consideration at the Vatican, and as the result of long continued negotiations the Holy Father has deputed Monsignor Merry del Val to proceed to Canada as Apostolic Delegate with a view to effecting a peaceable solution of the difficulty. Mgr. Merry del Val is the son of the Spanish ambassador to the Vatican. His own apartments are in the Vatican, and he is a special personal favourite of Leo XIII. Of all the Vatican's younger diplomatists, says the *Daily Chronicle*, he is the one of whom the highest hopes are entertained, and his fluency in French and English gives him a special fitness for this Canadian business. He has certainly a delicate task before him, the difficulty of which will not be lessened by the recent action of the Legislature of Manitoba, which, not content to await the coming of the Apostolic Delegate, has passed a Bill to give legal effect to the "settlement" which was proposed by Mr. Laurier. As is well known that so-called settlement is altogether unacceptable to the Catholic party and has, indeed, been abandoned on that ground by Mr. Laurier himself. The action of the Provincial Parliament is taken as an indication of its uncompromising temper and of its unwillingness to enter upon any further negotiations. Thirty-five out of forty members voted in favour of the measure, and only three French members were found to support a proposal for the establishment of separate schools. Fortunately, however, the issue is to be decided, not by the Legislature of Manitoba but by the Parliament of Canada, and as Mr. Laurier has abandoned his own scheme and given an assurance of goodwill and co-operation with the efforts of the Apostolic Delegate, it may be safely anticipated that the mission will be successful. Meanwhile *La Patrie*, the organ of the Premier in Montreal, announces officially, and with the consent of the Vatican, that the Canadian bishops have been requested to take no further action on the schools question until further instructions are received from Rome.

SMOKE "ROYAL COLORS" TOBACCO.  
(IMPROVED AROMATIC.)