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# ✠The Catholic News Agency✠

OWNED AND CONDUCTED BY

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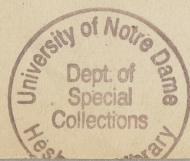
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## The Catholic News Agency and Politics

The Report of the Catholic Indian Bureau of 1905 contains an article, entitled "The Bureau and Politics" (pages 49 to 54). As the work and aims of the Catholic News Agency, conducted by me, are the same as those of the Indian Bureau, and as there are many who misunderstand or affect to misunderstand the motives of the News Agency, I publish extracts from this report which relate particularly to the point I wish to elucidate. The following are the extracts:

### THE BUREAU AND POLITICS.

It should be clearly understood, both among Catholics and non-Catholics, that the Bureau is not a political institution or agency. It should not be forgotten, however, that the character of its work brings it in daily contact with the different political parties, and that to accomplish its mission it must maintain friendly relations with men of every shade of political opinion and religious faith. It is to be expected that Protestants and Protestant organizations of a narrow and bigoted type (a few such may still be found) should antagonize and slander an organization whose object is to promote Catholic Indian interests; and when it scores a victory no one is surprised to hear them refer to it angrily and contemptuously as the "Catholic lobby." But the Bureau is also regarded with more or less disfavor by a certain class of Catholics, politicians, who, in practice, place the interests of their party above those of the Church, and particularly of the neglected and despised Indians. In the discharge of its duty it sometimes becomes necessary for the Bureau to publish unpalatable truths. At such times those who have reason to fear publicity accuse it of interfering in politics. They forget that the official acts of public men are public property. If every Catholic in the land subscribed to the Congressional Record and read it, there would be no necessity for anyone to point out Congressional acts and utterances. But such is not the case; and the necessity for informing the Catholic public on these matters is demonstrated by the erroneous views often entertained among the people, and the amazing items concerning Indian affairs that occasionally find their way into Catholic papers. That it is the duty of the Bureau to supply the Catholic public with reliable information in matters of importance pertaining to its work was impressed indelibly upon my mind by the following incident: The Catholic Indian schools never had a truer or more constant friend than Senator Jones, of Arkansas, who, in season





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and out of season, exerted in his influence in their behalf. This has been the history of his whole career in Washington. Threats and abuse poured in upon him from many of his constituents, but, convinced that he was in the right, he never for a moment faltered in his course. Yet during the last Senatorial contest in Arkansas, certain Catholics of that State were to the fore in the opposition to him, and why? The ostensible reason which they gave was that Senator Jones had said that he would favor the Catholic Indian schools, but that in reality *he had not done so*. An effort was made by the Bureau to correct this false impression; but Senator Jones was defeated, and the Catholic Indian schools lost a faithful and potent friend in the United States Senate. The responsibility for this loss, in a measure, rests upon those who circulated a slanderous report and upon the Bureau, which should have made such a report an impossibility by giving due and timely acknowledgment of services rendered. Mortified beyond measure at this miscarriage of justice, I resolved that such a shameful and ungrateful event should not occur again, if it were in my power to prevent it by circulating the truth. Actuated by this resolution, in my last report I endeavored to state clearly the attitude, both favorable and unfavorable, of those who had placed themselves on record in Catholic Indian matters; and an examination of that report will show that the truth was told regardless of the political affiliation of the parties in question. During the last campaign, in response to inquiries addressed to this office, such information as was sought was freely furnished, and in some instances special efforts were used to make known the record of particularly faithful friends, and this was done for members of both political parties alike. On one occasion, when our greatest benefactor had been totally misrepresented by those who knew better, and this at a time which rendered it almost impossible to correct the false impression, the only effective means within reach, radical, it is true, but honest and legitimate, was used to disseminate the truth. This is all the "political" work the Bureau has done, or proposes to do.

And this is all the "political work" the Catholic News Agency has done, or proposes to do!

### **Father Ketcham on the Bard Incident**

During the last campaign (1904) many Catholics broke away from their old political traditions. Fearing that this would result in an increase of Catholic influence, certain parties inimical to the Catholic Church took alarm, and in the hope of counteracting this influence cunningly concocted a "sensation" calculated to arouse suspicion and indignation in the country at large, and to strike Catholics with confusion and dismay. Senator Bard, of California, whose past record speaks for itself, in conjunction with the Washington Agent of the Indian Rights Association, led in this movement. Having cautiously concealed his knowledge of a "Catholic plot" for two years (until he was repudiated by his own party), he suddenly published to the world the "overtures" that had been made to him by Professor E. L. Scharf, who was held up to the public gaze as the "political agent of the Catholic Church." There was scarcely a man in Congress who gave serious consideration to this "revelation;" but a certain remark attributed to Senator Teller rendered it advisable for His Eminence, the Cardinal, to make a public statement, in the name of the Church and of the Bureau, of the fact that the Church has no such agent, and that Professor Scharf had never been employed by the Bureau in any capacity whatever. Mr. Scharf at once acknowledged the correctness of the Cardinal's statement, and affirmed that he had never represented himself as anybody's agent. However, Senator Bard's statement gave



perceptible impetus to the newspaper crusade against the "tribal funds' contracts," while the injection of Mr. Scharf into the controversy had the effect of diverting from the Senator a portion of the indignation that would otherwise have been vented upon him, and of so complicating the situation that in many instances the Catholic press seemed to lose sight of the main issue, and devoted its attention to the alleged "Catholic agent."

Many Catholics, and, indeed, many non-Catholics, have contributed their money or their influence to the Catholic Indian cause, and among these benefactors was Professor Scharf. The fact that he was never an agent or a representative of the Bureau, or that his assistance was unsolicited (other than by the appeal that the Bureau has addressed to all), does not alter the fact that he has at times rendered most valuable aid to the schools, nor does it relieve the Bureau of the obligation of recognizing those services, and of making due acknowledgement of them. This was done in the Annual Report and in the *Sentinel* of last year.

It has been intimated several times that Professor Scharf represented himself as being connected with the Bureau. This he has stoutly denied, and an investigation of each specific accusation has failed to afford evidence that he had made such profession. In every instance his relations to the Bureau have been clearly defined. For reasons best known to themselves there are some who, notwithstanding the statements made by this office or by the Cardinal himself, still persist in believing, or in professing to believe, that Mr. Scharf was an emissary of the Bureau.

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### Has Led to Most Important Results

On page 33 of the Indian Sentinel, also published by Father Ketcham, the Director of the Catholic Indian Bureau, year 1905, will be found the following acknowledgment:

"Professor E. L. Scharf, of Washington, D. C., who takes a deep interest in the welfare of our Mission Schools and never loses an opportunity of furthering their interests, has been able recently to render aid which has led to most important results."

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I must assert most emphatically, however, that while the policy of the Catholic News Agency is practically identical with that of the Indian Bureau, the News Agency has no connection whatever, or understanding with the Bureau. One is conducted by myself in the capacity of a citizen of this country, the other is an official agent of the Church.

The policy of the Catholic News Agency will be for the future, as it has been for the past, to inquire carefully into the records of our statesmen gathered in Washington every year, and to publish them as it finds them. In doing this, men of both parties will be accorded an absolutely impartial treatment.

E. L. SCHARF, Ph.D.



