

Echo de l'Ouest,

“Do what you ought to do whatever may happen”

Demeules & Laramée, Proprietors; E.R. Dufresne, Editor

(Minneapolis French Newspaper, Published from 1885 to 1929.

Translated by Bill Horn, Assisted by Kathy Horan-Grambsch & Jackie Demeules Hofhenke)

Translators Note: Following is a series of correspondence to and answers from the editors of Echo de l'Ouest. They involve the founding of another paper, Le Progres, in Minneapolis by a M. Paradis.

The colorful, critical and length language is a lost art. I'm struck by the general message about elevating the position of Canadians (meaning French-Canadians) in the community and the call for French-Canadian patriotism.

14 Jan 1885

Editorial

A French journal of this city, which bursts with announcing ... and indulges itself fat holidays every full moon ... announces pompously to its readers that l'Echo de l'Ouest is on the edge of falling in a ditch.

Alas! If the colleague [fellow editor] find the subject substantial and proper for him to save his existence, much good may it do him! But, if he awaits the disappearance of l'Echo de l'Ouest in order to publish his sheet, derisively decorated with the name “Progress”, every two weeks or less each month to satisfy his numerous patrons, [advertisers], who overflow these columns and his thousands of readers, we predict to him that there will be many years to content himself with a regime of dry crust.

The journal in question also announces with a great sigh of relief, that M. Louis Laramée, one of the proprietors of the Echo, withdraws his support. That is a lying affront invested by the scrupulous and robust colleague. We are authorized to give him a formal denial.

[Follows five more paragraphs that shed no more light on the subject except that the editor of “Progres” has had previous journalistic failures]

14 Jan 1885

Correspondence

Minneapolis 16 Mar 1885

To the Editor,

A short space in your journal, if you please, for the following lines.

Last spring or about that time, the paper you edit passed through the hands of the two members of the ownership of the journal “Canadian” of St. Paul. Yours was the only journal we had in Minneapolis. Several of our compatriots, highly regarded in this city and your humble servant, undersigned, believing rightly or wrongly, that the sale of l'Echo to the owners of “Canadian” meant its approaching disappearance, we resolved to found another journal to replace l'Echo. We wished to have a worthy French-Canadian journal and a couple

of months later, "Le Progres" of Minneapolis made its entry into the world.

[Translators note: The idea of Echo being sold seems to have come from false information passed about by the future editor of the new "Le Progres"]

The "Progres", yes readers, the "Progres" ... which under the ferocious inspiration of J. B. A. Paradis ought soon to make all Canadians of the West into a race of giants by the fever of progress, no double meaning intended.

But what a farce we were playing, naming our paper "Progres". We, who believed to have invented something more like a steam engine, we bore a "crayfish" [i.e. one step forward, two steps back] and a crayfish of the most beautiful water. [?]

Damn! Well, it is not wrong to tell under the general management who calls himself "Bombast" J. B. A. Paradis, seven times founder and printer of journals as can be said truthfully of "The Canadian" of St. Paul [apparently he ran it at one time] having known our men before by his appearance and tarnish [signs of printers work?] ... we thought him the size to move mountains, to scale the city, but look now, his is the opposite, rotten luck. We who thought to have put our hand on a veritable dynamiter, had only a pathetic firecracker, failed and raked [the French is "rate et rateau]. After ten months that he campaigned and fought like a partisan [a sans-culotte] in and for "Progres", instead of advancing, he retreated, always retreats. Ah heavens, the "every dish" loathed [he wrote "vomi"] by his compatriots of St. Paul, excuse the expression, he found a way in the space of three months to make a tempest around himself and ruin forever our enterprise in carelessly spreading the fire of discord among the Candians of Minnesota.

[There follows five more paragraphs criticizing Paradis, his ethics and management.]

I greatly regret that the twenty in all shareholders, led as I was, by a feeling of patriotism when we founded "Progres", into the lair of our crayfish, but that what would come has already arrived for a large number, and then snap! ... General Boom-boom!

I do not hesitate to say that "Progres" would be in existence today if we had an editor who was capable "on principle" to make itself representative of Candian views.

Those who wish to buy shares of "Progres" can address their mail to me and I will let them have as many as they want at half-price.

Yours, etc.

J. Cousineau, sharehold of "Progres" of Minneapolis

14 Jan 1885

Editorial

The editor of "Progres", despite what we have already told him during January, again insinuated last week that M. Louis Laramée has withdrawn his financial support of Echo de l'Ouest; the colleague (in the sense of a fellow journalist) ought at least to have taken the trouble to prove his assertion; the proceedings would have been more honorable and he would have saved himself the displeasure of again passing as a shameful liar.

Here is our response to the muddle-headed notable of the neighboring paper – let the public judge:

Minneapolis, 16 Mar 1885

(To) M. The editor of L'Echo

I've read in the "Progres de Minneapolis" 12th of the current month, an article in which M. M.B.A. Paradis, editor of that paper announces for the tenth time that I have withdrawn my financial support of Echo de l'Ouest;; nothing more false (could be) advanced. Moreover, our journal has no need of financial assistance, the moral support it meets everywhere and the growing patronage everyday accorded to it is amply sufficient to assure its existence.

Your devoted servant

Signed Ls. Laramee, one of the proprietors of Echo de l'Ouest

[editor again]

Is that conclusive enough? And will the editor of "Progres" still have the nerve to keep saying what he knows to be false? He is, indeed, capable. The arguments are useless and we will not stop ourselves further to react to the thrusts of the colleague, who has practiced to the letter ever since he has been in journalism, the famous maxim of Prouder: "Lie! Lie! Something always sticks".

The quibbling character disdainful pseudo-Canadien, who directs "Progres" of this city is well known by the public, has incensed provocations addressed to Echo de l'Ouest his malevolent attitude in regard to all that Echo has done here for our compatriots to all that tends toward the improvement of their position, since it has been in Minneapolis are well enough appreciated already, so we dispense with discussing them. They are all as real as harmful, as nasty, as lacking in patriotism, as those which we have just wiped out.

It is quite ridiculous to see this assassin struggle to pose as a champion of our rights, to make himself the defender of our institution, he who has done nothing but dirty with his malicious words, everything he touches, everything he encounters. His element, his principle is to foment discord among others, it is to destroy instead of edify.

If we have advice to give to our colleague of the Canadien of St. Paul and our correspondent today (J. Cousineau's letter), it would be to leave alone this destroyer at bay.

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