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Father Rousselot Is the Creator Of New Science

Priest Achieves Remarkable Scientific Results in Phonetics

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)
Paris—Abbe Rousselot, author of the device which located the gigantic German gun that shelled Paris in the spring of 1918, and who has received from the French Parliament a grant of 10,000 francs with which to restore his laboratory and enable him to continue the researches and inventions, is the creator of a new science, "experimental phonetics."

For the last 23 years Father Rousselot has had full charge of a laboratory in the College de France, which is one of the most important of French scientific institutions. It was Father Rousselot's initiative which gave the laboratory existence.

Lauded by Anti-Cleric
The motion for a subsidy for Father Rousselot's investigations was made by Fr. Wetterle, deputy from Alsace. It was carried unanimously after being warmly supported by M. Herriot, who reported the budget for public instruction. Herriot is a violent anti-clerical and leader of his party in the Chamber, but he made it a point to pay a high tribute to the merits of the Catholic priest who invented "experimental phonetics."

Father Rousselot is now 74 years old. For nearly half his life he has been working in this department of practical science. His first results were divulged by him in the Catholic Institute where he was a professor. The results achieved thus far are the subject of several volumes. It would be impossible in the space of a short article to give even a fair summary of Father Rousselot's discoveries, but a brief story of how he was led to create this new science may be found quite interesting.

It was while pursuing literary work that this scientist (who is a Doctor of Laws) was brought to undertake a complete study of the writer's fundamental instrument—language. Having conceived a taste for linguistics, he became absorbed in making a thorough survey of the variations, deformations and improvements of human speech. There is nothing more unsteady, change-

able than language. It is constantly undergoing refinement and discipline on the lips of the refined, while it slackens, alters and corrupts in the mouths of the vulgar. In a few generations, by imperceptible degeneration or improvement, any idiom may be wholly transformed. What general laws govern these evolutions?

Experiments with Dialects

Taking as the field of his investigations the various changes undergone by the country people's dialects in the course of two or three generations, Father Rousselot at first made numerous precise experiments in his own province. In order to record these experiments he contrived some special instruments with which he was enabled to widen the scope of his investigations. (This extension of practical work, in turn, helped him to improve his instruments. In short, he gathered a full treasure of new and accurate observations from which he drew some general principles established on facts deeply rooted in nature itself. He then devised an entire set of clever apparatus. The new science was born.

The first object of this science is to record mathematically all the shades and vibrations of human speech and consequently of any sound whatever; to dissect all its mechanism with the utmost accuracy; to preserve, as it were, its very shape and physiognomy. Thanks to the delicate and faithful apparatus perfected by Father Rousselot, and to the scientific laws established by his studies, the most fugitive exclamation that comes from human lips, the faintest noise, can be caught, held, photographed. Moreover, these sounds can be analyzed into their infinitesimal and often most complex elements. It is even possible to state their origin and formation. The progress accomplished by this discovery, which promises further to improve linguistics and facilitate the study of the language, is most important. The gain to other sciences through Father Rousselot's investigations, experiments and inventions is notable.

Has Helped Medical Diagnosis

Take medicine as one example: While decomposing the human speech, Father Rousselot has succeeded in determining, by means of figures and drawings, mathematically established, the exact part performed by each of the several organs involved in the production of a given sound. All the accidental or congenital defects in the organs practically can be photographed. A minute, microscopic defect of the larynx, of the tongue, of the palate, of the nose, or of the respiratory system may be recorded by an accurate apparatus, and the diagnosis of the disease thus greatly illuminated.

Father Rousselot, through the application of his discoveries, has even pointed the way to new methods of treating diseases of the ear and impediments of speech. He has succeeded also in seizing in the air and reducing to scientific drawings the various sounds of a gun; the faint and distant report, the whizzing of shells through years.

When the war was nearing its close, Father Rousselot was on the point of putting another of his investigations, the disposal of the French Government, as a means of leading by sound the act position of a submarine.

Youth of France Made Experts in Social Science

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)
Paris—Cardinal Maurin, Archbishop of Lyons, in a letter just published points to the necessity of giving the greater development to the agricultural and industrial education of "Catholic youth by making them more thoroughly familiar with the modern improvements of science. His Eminence thus adds his approval and assistance to the organization of professional teaching, which at this moment is one of the principal concerns of both the clergy and the philanthropists of France.

In the diocese of Lyons alone the success achieved by the Diocesan Agricultural School was such that it is deemed necessary to acquire grounds for a second school which is to be large and commodious. A generous family has presented for this purpose a large mansion surrounded by an extensive tract where the most varied cultures may be undertaken.

An industrial school will be opened at Lyons in October. The priest in whom direction of the school is to be entrusted was, before entering the priesthood, a civil engineer. At the same time the clergy are concerned with the training of high professional men both for agriculture and industry, and they leave no stone unturned to fit them for social work. They are thus starting in the Catholic University of Lille a new "School of Social Science," where all young men who may be called upon to play a part in the direction of either public or industrial life may pursue special courses in sociology, political economy and social studies. They will visit factories, by an accurate apparatus, and the diagnosis of the disease thus greatly illuminated.

One of the teachers in this school will be M. Eugene Duthoit, who was a member of the French Catholic Mission to the United States. He is now president of the "Social Work" in France. The school of studies, both social and political, is to cover two years.

ORIGINALITY

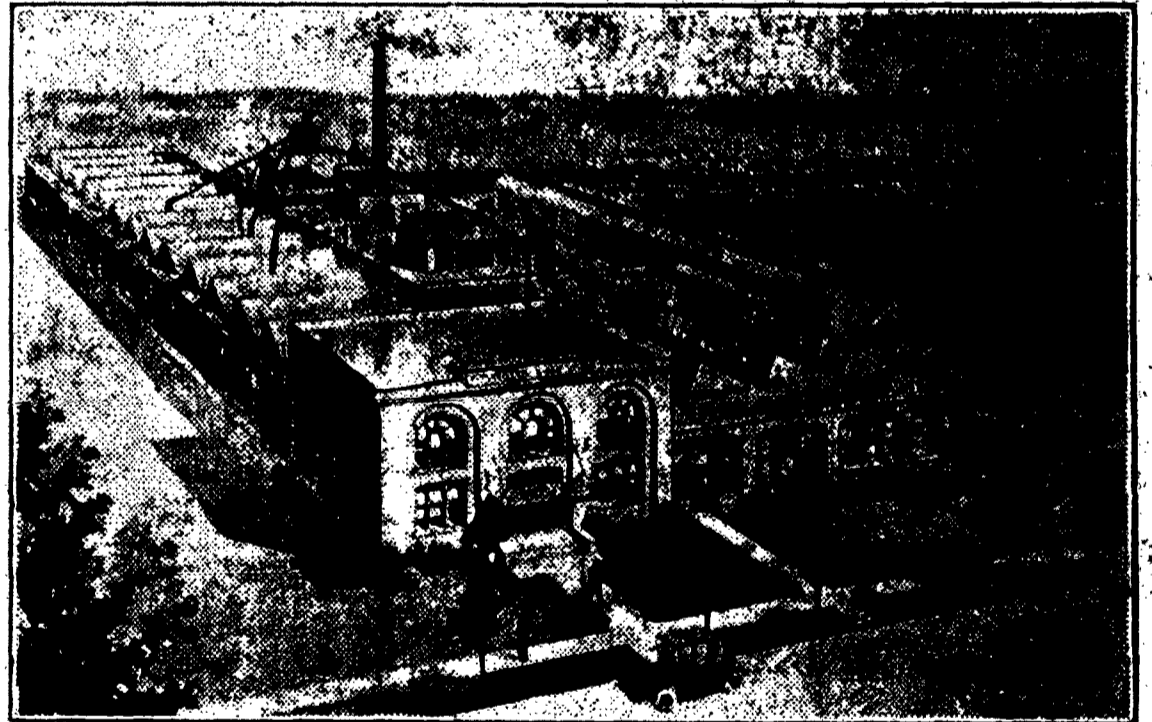
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