

## Important Work of Rare Assimilation Now Going on—A Visit to the Ruthenian Colony in the North End—Religious Life.

Someone has remarked that the great process of assimilation of the races which has been proceeding on this northern continent for the past hundred years, is but a reduplication of the process which centuries ago took place in the British Isles. Certain it is, that many of the same racial elements are being poured into the crucible of nationality on this continent as were employed then. Into the composite British nationality there went Dane, Saxon, Teuton, Celt and Frank. The same races are undergoing a similar process on this continent. In the whole range of human endeavor and achievement, there is nothing more profound than this great silent unification, assimilation and nationalization into common racial brotherhood of all these diverse nations. To Canada has been vouchsafed a great share in this all-important work. How necessary then it becomes that those people shall be welcomed in the broadest spirit and taught to value and to cherish the privileges of nationhood to which they are thus invited, and made to feel that they too can fill a worthy and a useful part in the life of the nation.

### A Personal Visit.

In order to gather information at first hand as to the progress of the Ruthenians, one of the largest of the contingent of foreigners who are coming to this country, a Tribune reporter accompanied by Mr. Thos. Stefanik, provincial organizer of Ruthenian schools for Manitoba, visited the Ruthenians in the north end yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Stefanik is in himself an instance of what can be accomplished by their people. He is a bright young man with a University education, a good linguist and a thorough and practical educationist.

### First Immigration.

"The first Ruthenian immigration to Canada," said Mr. Stefanik, was in 1894. From year to year thereafter, there was a steady augmentation in the number of the immigrants. In 1895 there were only five Ruthenian families in this city. At present there are about 10,000 Ruthenians here. At first only the poorer class came. Now many are coming who have some means and a fair education. It is the ambition of each of them to get a lot as soon as they can after arrival. Here they build a shack. By and by as the years pass these shacks are pulled down to make room for cottages, some small and others larger. Many Ruthenians now hold considerable property in Winnipeg. In nearly all cases, they own their own homes. The majority of them are laborers, but we also find amongst them business men, mechanics skilled in all kinds of trades, and they are said to be amongst the most skilful workmen procurable. As a rule, the Ruthenians of all classes are industrious and hardworking."

### Shacks Disappearing.

"An investigation of the city will show that many of the old shacks formerly built by Ruthenians are passing away and are giving place to better residences, cottages, etc. Just as is happening with those of other nationalities who came to this country.

### Law Abiding.

"Are they law-abiding, Mr. Stefanik?" asked the reporter. "Yes, in this respect they will by reference to the criminal statistics compare favorably with any other class or foreigners. It is true they are sometimes referred to as being quarrelsome and dishonest. Investigation, however, does not prove that they can not stand comparison with any other class of settlers. It will be found that most of the fights that take place result from drinking. Many of those are young men who have been working steadily after coming out here, and finding themselves with more money than they have been accustomed to, and finding the new air of liberty and freedom somewhat exhilarating, occasionally go to the extreme of license.

"But when we consider the conditions under which they formerly existed, and their sudden release from those conditions, the great wonder is that they observe the law as well as they do, even from the start. It will indubitably be found that the longer they are residents in this country and the more they realize the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, the more amiable they are to the laws and ways of their adopted country until their things by and by become a source of real pride to them. It must be remembered that in their native land many of them did not get an education, and it is easy to imagine what a disadvantage this must be in the race of life even in this country. The peasant, although heavily taxed, did not even get the chance of educating his children.

"In cases of those who had some means the boys were sent to school but the girls did not get this opportunity. In recent years a large number of the younger men and women have emigrated to Canada.

### Lived Down Prejudice.

"When they came to this country first, there was a great outburst of prejudice against them in the press and elsewhere. They were said to be quarrelsome and dishonest. If those critics had taken the trouble to investigate the matter for themselves, they would find that they were mistaken. That they are worthless, as been absolutely and totally disproved by the actual results which they speak for themselves. During the time they have been in this country they have done remarkably well, and considering their tremendous disadvantages, coming here unable to speak our language and with little or no education, or means they have done marvellously well. They only need in order to secure their adhesion to them. Many who were formerly leading agitators are now settling down to good and useful citizens.

"What religion do they profess?"

To this Mr. Stefanik replied as follows:—"At present we have four Ruthenian churches of different denominations. There is a Ruthenian Roman Catholic Church and a Ruthenian Greek Church, a Ruthenian Independent Church and a Ruthenian Orthodox Church.

"These are the church of St. Nicholas at the corner of McGregor and Stella Sts., the Church of St. Volodimir and Olha at the opposite corner of Stella and McGregor; the Independent Church of our Saviour at the corner of Pritchard and McGregor, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church at the corner of Manitoba and McKenzie.

### Stand for Four Hours.

"The church of St. Nicholas is conducted by the Reverend Father Busihuns, Duydyk and Pylypiw. This is one of the largest Ruthenian churches in Canada. It holds over 2,000 people and the services are crowded. The Church of Volodimir and Olha is also crowded. The pastor there is the Rev. Father Homeski. This church is smaller, holding some 500 people, and hundreds are usually turned away. That they are earnest in their worship may be gathered from the fact that in the churches there are no benches, and they remain standing from 9 o'clock until one o'clock in the afternoon. Many of the young people who are coming out here get married soon after their arrival; this explains those weddings of which we hear so much. In the time from January 15 to February 1, 85 couples were thus united in the bonds of matrimony.

### Pastors are Worthy Men.

"The pastors, as a rule, are a good class of men, hard-working, sympathetic and of high moral purpose and irreproachable life and thus exercising a good influence in their people. The churches also help the poorer classes. As an instance, last Sunday a collection of \$45 was taken up for 5 children of tender years, who have been bereft of their parents. They will be thus cared for until turned over to irreproachable life and thus exercising a good influence.

"One of them has already been adopted by a childless family of Ruthenians.

### Night Schools.

"The Ruthenian children attend the Board schools and are found to be apt and intelligent pupils. These children generally pick up the English language in less than a year. In many homes the children speak English only, the parents speaking Ruthenian.

### Eager to Learn.

"That the adult members of the Ruthenian colony, many of them parents with families, are eager for education also to overcome the great handicap under which they themselves started life, is seen from the large number of them who attend the night school which, as a matter of fact, are crowded.

### Popular Lectures.

"The Ruthenians of this city have a society called the Ruthenian Educational Society of Winnipeg, and a library in connection with it. This place is at the corner of Stella and McGregor and is called Jastrewski Hall, with a membership of about 500. Popular lectures are here delivered once a week by leading Ruthenians, including myself who am President of the Society this year. Among the subjects discussed there are such as Canadian History, world Geography, social and political economy, the modes of government adopted by different nations, the histories of the different races of the world, invention, physiology and hygiene and various kindred subjects all calculated to improve the mental equipment and outlook of our people. We have some prominent business men, butchers, grocers, estate agents, etc., and a shipping agency at 834 Main Street, conducted by Mr. W. Swoboda, one of our brightest young men, and a graduate of one of the business colleges of the city. He has done a great deal of work known only to few, in the way of helping his countrymen upon arrival to get situations, and in assisting them in every possible way, until they become firmly established in their adopted country.

### A Visit to Some Homes.

"At the invitation of Mr. Stefanik, our reporter visited Mr. George Panciko, at the corner of Parr and College streets. Mr. Panciko has a nicely furnished home with a piano and other evidences of comfort and taste.

"I came to this country," he said, "without a cent, 14 years ago, but since that time both my wife and myself have worked very hard. I worked as a carpenter and my wife has done washing. We have now a house of 11 rooms, fully modern, with a good home, and another on Jarvis street. They are both worth about \$12,000. We had to work very hard. We have seven children and they are all attending school.

### The Other Side.

"Along with Mr. Stefanik the reporter visited the poorer section of the district and found a state of affairs which should be remedied as speedily as possible. In one building, one of the rooms, only about 165 x 16 had no less than four beds. In this room two entire families lived, parents and children. The men there have done no work for three months. They are strangers and cannot speak English. They were working in the country and when the job 'gave out' on arrival of winter, they came in here. They are not only strangers in the city, but on account of their short residence here, even don't know many of their own countrymen.

They said they had tried to get work right along. On being asked if they had gone to the Associated Charities they said they had never heard of it. Now, this might appear strange, but when we consider their ignorance of the language it is quite probable. Here is a difficult situation and constitutes a real danger, and rather than have such a state of affairs continue, the suggestion might be considered if one of the organizations that do work of this kind havin

some one with a knowledge of their language investigate cases of this kind so as to secure employment for those people who are undoubtedly anxious to get a start. In that same block one of the men said there were some thirty out of work.

#### Education.

Again referring to the matter of education, this time including the Province as a whole, Mr. Stefanik proceeded:—"Under the auspices of the government of the province and the Hon. Mr. Coldwell, Minister of Education, the Ruthenians, as regards education are not behind the people of other nationalities. They have at present some 50 bi-lingual schools in the province conducted by the Ruthenian bi-lingual teachers. There are several new schools of this kind to be built in the outlying districts, but there is a difficulty in the supply of teachers. To overcome this difficulty, the government has established a training college in Brandon where there are some 44 Ruthenian pupils from 18 to 20 years of age who have received a fairly good education in the Old Country and who are qualifying as teachers, and when they are ready the difficulty of an adequate supply of bi-lingual teachers will be largely overcome. The parents, as well as the children, throughout the Province are taking a great interest in education and in the year 1908, there was a good attendance, although on account of the roads, that was by no means the big year.

#### Have Made Good.

"The Ruthenians have had great disadvantages to overcome in their early settlement. For some reason or other, almost invariably, they were placed in poor parts of the country, but, in spite of this, they have achieved a surprising degree of prosperity. The worst localities are Gimli, Rockburn and Stewartburn. In the Shoal Lake district and around Oakburn and Rossburn, where the land is better they have done exceedingly well. They are very active and eager in organizing schools. These people throughout the Province are taking a deep interest in their adopted country and follow closely the various questions of the day.

#### Appreciative.

They thoroughly appreciate their privileges as British subjects and the great majority of them soon apply for their naturalization papers."

Mr. Stefanik here suggested that it might be advisable to have the children taught civics and agriculture as this would prove of great use to them and give them even a higher appreciation of their duty and responsibility as citizens. The conduct of the children, on the whole is very praiseworthy as an investigation will prove. They are bright and intelligent and growing up into good citizens. In connection with many of the schools in the Province, in addition to the night schools, good libraries are now being established and they are quick to take advantage of those opportunities of self-improvement."

J. K. F.